

MARCH 1981

NUMBER 37

# THE SPACE GAMER

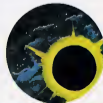
THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

\$2.00



## COSMIC ENCOUNTER

TRoubles in VALETIA  
FREEDOM IN THE GALAXY VARIANT  
HYBORIAN RISK  
WEAPONS CONTEST WINNERS  
PLAYING THE ALIEN  
FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED  
AND 6 PAGES OF REVIEWS





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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a constipated unicorn in heat             | <input type="checkbox"/> a pygmy with a backfiring blowgun                 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> a naxgal with diarrhea                    | <input type="checkbox"/> I plead the fifth amendment; evil spirits may sue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a one-legged giant with bursters          | <input type="checkbox"/> All equally dangerous                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saruman's mother-in-law                   | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above                                 |

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# THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 37 — MARCH, 1981

## IN THIS ISSUE

Our cover article is a review of *Conan Encounter*, one of the most popular SF games ever released. Our thanks to Ron Fuchs for their permission to reproduce art from this game.

There follows an article which should be of interest to anyone who has contemplated entering (or GMing) a commercial play-by-mail game. It will have a special interest for some hundreds of you . . .

For satiric game masters, we have guidelines for playing the creature from *Allen*. Also, Bruce Webster concludes his two-part series on "The Ten Deadly Sins of Computer Game Writing." Our company report this issue is from Fantasy Games Unlimited, creators of *Chivalry & Sorcery*. For Conan fans, there is a *Ruk* variant; for the hardcore boardgamers, there is a variant on *Freedom in the Galaxy*.

Towards the end is Nick Schuessler's eleventh and final game design article. Next month, Steve Jackson will take over the series.

Also, this month I have begrudged an extra column for letters. (It is a case of supply-side economics.)

—Forest Johnson

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THE SPACE GAMER (ISSN 0194-9977, USPS 434-210) is published monthly by The Space Gamer, 7207 Orion Crossing Dr., Austin, TX 78746. Second class postage paid at Austin, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Space Gamer, P.O. Box 18805, Austin, TX 78760.

All material is copyright 1981 by The Space Gamer. All rights reserved.

Printed in U.S.A. by Futura Press, Austin.

Subscription rates, effective 5-15-80.

	U.S.	Canada	Other foreign
One year	\$21	\$24	\$41
Two years	\$39	\$45	\$79
Lifetime	\$250	\$260	N/A

All prices are in U.S. dollars; payment must be in U.S. dollars.

# Where We're Going

Thanks to all of you who wrote in answer to the survey — there have been a lot of responses! — and especially to the readers who answered the question I asked a few months ago in this column. The question if you've forgotten, involved TSG's content, specifically, should there ever be articles about historical games printed by Steve Jackson Games? The answer was a pretty thorough NO. The great majority of you don't want anything but *s-f* and fantasy.

That's the way it'll be, then. It's the answer I expected — actually, it's the answer I was hoping for, because I don't like the idea of changing the TSG format any more than you do, if there'd been a big popular demand in the other direction, we would have gone along. But there wasn't. Just as well . . . That means that, if and when SJ Games does a purely historical title, you won't see any long articles on it. Maybe a capsule review, if somebody writes one. *The Space Gamer* will remain what it always has been, a magazine of science fiction and fantasy gaming. And it will continue to be as unbiased as we can make it . . . reserving the right to put in an occasional, unobtruded commercial plug in this column. Such as the following.

\*\*\*

We've got five new titles coming up in the next couple of months — all purely *s-f/fantasy*, and all of them (in my own highly biased opinion) pretty good.

First: more *Cardboard Heroes*. We've been reading the mail, and (even as I write this) Denis Louiet is working on figures for three more sets to fill the common requests.

Set One, you remember, was *Player Characters*. Set Two is bad guys: *Goblins, Orcs, and Gnomes*. The brigands are human natives of various sorts, some would make good player-characters in their own right, others are just scum. (And a couple of the former are modeled after real people — the ones whose names we drew out of the slips returned to us by buyers.) After

lengthy discussion, we decided that *Goblins* are small, stouter, and green . . . and that's how Denis is drawing them. *Orcs*, of course, are nasty. They're not pig-faced, though. Big, husky, fanged, and a little pointy-headed — really tough looking.

Set Three is more humanoid types: *Half-Orcs, Reptile Men, and Kobolds*. The half-orcs are a little bit smarter-looking than the full ones, and differently costumed (you could also play them simply as a tribe of orcs). Kobolds are small, husky, and blue-skinned. Reptile men look like a cross between men and dragons — beautiful and dangerous. Illustrated are the front and back views of one of the first to be drawn — the reptile man in full plate armor. This is just



the line-drawing — you should see the colored version.

Set Four is animals. We're planning 43 different beasts, from little apes and guard dogs all the way up to saber-tooth tigers. In between will be plenty of wolves, reptiles, giant insects, fardlurs, and other creatures.

These ought to be out by April. If work goes well, they'll be on the order blank in the next TSG.

\*\*\*

Also coming up are two new games. Format on both will be similar to the ones we've already done — with one difference. Rather than print the rules on the same sheet as the map, we're going to put maps/charts/tables on one sheet AND include a rulebook — probably 24 pages. A number of you have commented that the single-sheet rules in *Kung Fu and Iron* have sometimes been hard to handle — so we'll try it a different way. It'll cost a little bit more, but (unless inflation catches up to me faster than I expect) the new games will still be \$3.00.

The first new title is in *mini-playmat* right now. We know everything works, we're just getting it all lined down. The

## Next Issue

Our April issue will feature "The Double-Timing, Double-Crossing, Pick-a-Past Paradox" (1); also:

The results of our 1980 Game Survey;

Conan's greatest battles, converted to scenarios for SPT's Prestas system.

The winners of the combination game contest;

An article on used ships for Traveller;

Steve Jackson's first article in the Game Design series;

And some substantial quantity of capsule reviews.



## Errata

In issue 34 we listed Michael S. Mathway as the designer of *Heroic 2002*, but credited Keny Anderson, who was responsible for the original game concept.

**saucer? CAR WARS.**

That's right. Even want to blow away the car that cut you off the freeway . . . drop a few sparks on the road in front of a tailgater . . . take on a cycle gang with the twin machineguns under your hood? That's what CAR WARS is about. Science fiction stories and James Bond movies have been playing with armed autos for years, but nobody ever published a game about them. Until now . . .

CAR WARS stems from an idea by Chad Irby, an Austin resident who is every bit as demoted as anyone else around the TSR offices. He did the initial draft, I'm doing the rewrite. The final product will have both our names on it. In CAR WARS, players design freeway-combat vehicles, complete with weapons, armor, power plants, suspension, and even body style. Then they head for the road — to come home as aces, or crash and burn. Movement is on a grid system, with each 1-second turn divided into ten 1/10 second phases. Combat is simple and very deadly.

One nice thing about this one: it allows a successful character to build up experience and status, as well as wealth. You can play it as a standard one-shot or one-or-two-player game . . . OR as a continuing campaign with several players, lots of driver (or gunner) characters, and a referee.

The other new one is my own project. It's not as far along, just because I've been getting CAR WARS ready for the playtesters . . . but it's getting there. This one doesn't have a name yet — but it was inspired by Bruce Stoker's *Dwarves*.

The title seems a natural — but after I'd worked on it for a while I understood why it hadn't been done. There are problems with the original *Dwarves* story, as

far as gaming goes. Some of them aren't ironed out yet — but it's just a matter of time.

Right now, the vampire player gets to move around on a map of London, trying to control his coffin and find new victims. His pursuers search for his hide-outs while trying to alert the city to the danger. When the players meet, they battle. Eventually, the "gotch Un-Dead" dies (or is driven away) — or the vampire hunter bites the dust instead.

I doubt this one will have a soloist version, unless I get inspired. Right now, it looks like it will work OK with two players; better with three (vampire, the hunters, and a referee). Or there can be more than one hunter-player. The game

will draw from both role-playing and wargame concepts. I've got a couple of ideas that came too late to be included in *Fantasy Trip* . . . so I'll work them in here. Basically, this is going to be an FRP game that works itself out in one or two sessions, rather than continuing indefinitely. Eventually, somebody will win . . . and you can start another game later.

Both of these games will come out together . . . around a month to two months after the new *Cardboard Heroes*. Look for them sometime in May if all goes well. And if any of you see me looking slightly hurried between now and then . . . that's probably why. But it's fun!

—Steve Jackson

## GAME MASTER

*GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry — no individual replies are possible.*

*GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errors or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.*

### Dungeons & Dragons

In D&D, can the effects of potions, rods (etc.), spells, artifacts, or relics be made permanent by the 8th level *magician's spell "permanency"*? The *Player's Handbook* does not say yes or no.

—Richard Jensen

David Cook of TSR Games replies: "The effects of magic items may only be made permanent when the effects are the same as those

of the spells listed under the description of 'permanency'!"

### Kunst (aka Prockorevika)

1. What happens to an Engineer unit caught on a ledge if it is being destroyed?
2. Are units allowed to advance on a DE, AE, or X combat result? How many bases?
3. When units from two different corps attack, can artillery support come from one corps, both corps, or neither?

—Richard Hilt

Stephen G. Wilcox replies on behalf of Test Force Games:

1. "A bridge cannot be destroyed until after the engineer unit has completed its construction, after which it must move off as per (4.25). No unit may destroy the bridge until the engineer has moved."
2. "If a DEFENDING unit is eliminated as a result of an AE or X, any surviving attacking units may advance one hex (see 5.4)."
  1. "Artillery from both corps are allowed to support."

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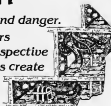
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## Featured Review:

# Cosmic Encounter

by Steve Jackson

I first saw COSMIC ENCOUNTER played at the World SF convention in Miami, back in 1977. It was hard to miss . . . every lobby of the hotel seemed to have at least one table full of people with their big hexagons spread out in front of them, pushing colored tokens back and forth and laughing like maniacs. Definitely, the game was a hit. Well, it's three years later . . . and they're still playing.

COSMIC ENCOUNTER is like no other game you've ever seen. It has elements of wargaming and boardgaming — even a dash of role-playing. It is simple enough for a party game — but it can be as esoteric as Diplomacy.

There's no simulation whatsoever in COSMIC ENCOUNTER, the whole thing is totally stylized. Each player starts out with a stack of tokens ("bases") located on his own home hexagon ("home world"). The object of the game is to get bases on three enemy home-worlds — by force, negotiation, or whatever-you. Combat is settled by the play of cards, either player can ask for allies, which is where the diplomacy comes in.

The complexity comes into the game via the "alien powers." The basic set of COSMIC ENCOUNTER has 15 "alien power" cards — each representing a different alien race, with names like Laser, Virus, Macro, Amoeba, Teader, and Void. Each alien race has a different "power" — that is, it can break the rules in a different, specified way. For instance, the Laser makes its opponent in a challenge play "blind" — selecting a card at random. The Amoeba can "occur" its base across the board, rather than following normal movement rules. The Void attacks like any other player — but tokens it takes from its foes are lost forever with no hope of recovery. And so on . . .

Since the Basic Game has components for 2 to 4 players, and 15 different aliens, the number of possible combinations is



obviously immense. Add to this the fact that a "shared win" is possible through negotiation, and the strategic possibilities become numbing. Again, like Diplomacy, this is a game where skill at the rules is only the beginning. To win, you must be able to play your opponents off against each other.

All in all, I consider CE to be a real winner, for three important reasons. First, it's a highly interactive game, with lots of variety — but it's easy to learn. Second, it's quick, you can play three or four games in an evening without getting tired. And third, it's a great value. You get a box, with lots of components — attractive, shiny, useful components — for only \$12.00. How many times have I paid more than that for a "big company" game that looked shocky by comparison, and played out quickly?

### Strategy

I don't want to take up a lot of space talking about strategy. The game itself includes a good explanation of basic strategy — and you'll have to play a few games to get the feel of it anyway. I will mention my own favorite winning method. Call it the "Thunderbolt." It consists of conservative play throughout the beginning and middle, while hoarding one or two good edict cards and the best attack card I can get hold of. I build up to four bases — one short of the number needed to win. Of course, in order to be inoffensive, I will have nominated other players to build up to four also. At this unstable point in the game, I toss loose the thunderbolt — an all-or-nothing gamble to get that one last base. It usually works. Needless to say, I have to

keep an eye on other players who might be (consciously or otherwise) working toward the same thing.

One general bit of advice: watch ALL your opponents ALL the time . . .

### Expansion Sets

The only real problem with the basic COSMIC ENCOUNTER set is that only four can play. Easily solved that problem neatly (and profitably) with its first two "expansion sets." Each of these expansion sets provides ten new alien powers, and a planet hex and tokens for one more player. Thus, when you get them both, you have a total of 35 aliens, and a set that accommodates up to 6. Since the central hexagon in the game has only 6 sides, six is the maximum number of players that can (theoretically) play a "normal" game of CE.

Most of the new powers in these two sets are just as good as any of the originals. A few are "far out" enough that the cards bear warnings not to use them in a two-player game or (in a few cases) against certain specified opponents. That is not a serious problem, though.

As it turned out, the first two expansion sets were just the beginning. EXPANSION SET 3 added 15 more aliens, as well as one new playing card. Three of the new cards are new "edicts" — those being special event cards which affect play in unusual manners. Again, a few of the new aliens are limited in permissible use — but again, not a serious problem.

EXPANSION SET 4 is a deck of cards — the "Flare Cards." One flare card is presented for each of the fifty aliens in the foregoing sets. The "flare" rules allow players to augment their existing powers or borrow other players' powers. Flare play can get pretty wild. Like the "multi-power" game possible with the basic set (each player draws two, three, or even more alien-power cards, and uses them ALL), flare play can become frustratingly complex.

EXPANSION SET 4 also adds rules for adding a seventh and eighth player to the game. It does this by presenting two sorts of aliens who don't play on the board. One is the Zlich, who has the power to blitz, look at everyone's hand, and tell what he sees. If the winner in the player the Zlich predicted (secretly) before the game began, the Zlich shams his win. Fun! The other off-board power is the Shrek, who can cut in on anyone's hand. I don't think much of this power — it turns the game into a free-for-all, and victory becomes a matter of luck.

With EXPANSION SET 5, sanity goes

right out the window. The name of the set is "100 Moons." Each of these "moons" is a playing piece to be added to the board. When a moon is revealed, its reverse side will give instructions to all the players or some of the players — ranging from the relatively reasonable ("Nall — While occupying this moon, you lose your alien powers") to the totally silly ("Tongars — While this moon is occupied, each player must speak in rhymes whenever talking, or lose a token to the warg for each prose utterance). Play with moons tends to be absolutely unpredictable. If you're in a moon game, don't try to make any long-range plans, just go with the flow.

#### Recommendations

As ought to be obvious by now, I like COSMIC ENCOUNTER. It's totally original, and a lot of fun. I recommend it without reservation to gamers, with the following exceptions:

(1) Don't buy CE if you have no opponents. It's worthless as a solitary game, and (in my own opinion) very little fun as a two-player contest. The more, the merrier.

(2) Don't buy CE if you are heavily into "simulation," or if you don't like games where diplomacy is more important than tactics. CE is a conceptual game, simulating nothing except the very essence of negotiation and power politics.

As to the expansion sets: If you like the basic game, you'll like the first three expansions. Play them for a while before getting expansions 4 or 5. If you find that you prefer a relatively "pure" game, you don't need the expansions. However, if you find yourself playing lots of six-player games, trading powers in the middle of the games, and/or playing while in altered mental states... by all means get the fleets and moons.

**COSMIC ENCOUNTER** (Eon Products) \$12.95. Designed by Bill Eberly, Neil Elson, Peter Obitka, and Jack Kinnage. Board, with five large play hexagons, 4 sets of 20 colored tokens and 4 large star dices, 34 cards, 13 alien power cards, one Army board "super-space card," and Space 20" x 11" rulebook, 2 to 4 players, playing time about 45 minutes. Published 1977.

**CE EXPANSION SET 1** \$4.95. Ten new alien cards, one large hexagon and one set of colored tokens. Six to six players.

**CE EXPANSION SET 2** \$4.95. Similar to Set 1.

**CE EXPANSION SET 3** \$4.95. Fifteen new alien cards, one extra card.

**CE EXPANSION SET 4** \$4.95. 10 "Alien" cards and three fleets, plus instructions.

**CE EXPANSION SET 5** \$4.95. 100 perforated "moon" cards, plus instructions.

## Proclaiming the arrival of...



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...with a blazing shriek a second Resk leaped from the outcropping, swinging a short belisane. Telegar snapped his shield up to catch the blow but the force knocked him flat on his back a second time. As his shoulders hit he pushed up and over his head with the shield, flinging the Resk away before it could free its axe for another try. Scrambling to his feet, Telegar faced the Resk who'd already recovered its footing. It brandished its axe warily. Telegar advanced a step and leaped with his sabre tip

... as he pierced the Resk through, she embedded his helm and smashed into the Dwarf's shoulder. The metal split without the edge, but the shoulder was broken.

Before Telegar could roll the Resk over to recover his sabre, the first Resk had recovered its breath and its feet...

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Lords of Valetia is an adult game open to anyone 18 years of age or older living within the continental US. Residents of Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, or having AFPO/AFPC addresses will only be accepted on provision that the customer realize there may be excessive postal delays to those areas at times. All funds must be paid in US currency.

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Langton

The following extracts compose a history of the play-by-mail game *Lords of Valetia*. They are in approximate chronological order. Except for obvious typographical errors, no attempt has been made to improve the grammar or spelling of the originals.

*Full-page advertisement in S&T, September/October, 1976* Proclaiming the arrival of THE LORDS OF VALETIA; Fantasy Campaign with thousands of players; System of promotion with \$400.00 in prizes. Simultaneous movement by correspondence. Imagine a portal which could transport you from this world to a fantastic land of unparalleled beauty and adventure. . . . We publish the quarterly magazine *Valetia*. . . .  
Ann Varkus Enterprises

*Letter to "the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Noble Order of Peregrinators," April 19, 1977* . . . I wish to acknowledge my responsibility for the design and delay of *Lords of Valetia* also. After failing to maintain the strict schedule for the game and with severe financial difficulties, I relinquished title of my venture to James Ronco and his company . . .

Andrew Baird

*Letter to "prospective" peregrinators, Summer, 1980* . . . we at Design Operations were contacted and asked if we were interested in the rights to *Lords of Valetia*. Believing in the potential of this game, we agreed to fulfill their promise in the S&T ad in exchange for sole ownership. . . .

James Ronco

*Lords of Valetia notebook, copyright 1977 by R,B&S Design Operations. Dedicated to the Patient Ones.*

*Heritage sheet, 8/77* . . . go and attain the fifth level of your Re'arth to prove yourself before the voice of time. Retaineth then, and you shall be told of your heritage . . .

# TROUBLES in Valetia

## From the Correspondence of Aubrey Elvensage

*Heritage sheet, Sage:* . . . attain the fourth level in the Ring by courage and wisdom alone. If you can accomplish such a feat, then and only then, will it be shown that you are one strong enough to control the powers. . . .

*Game question replies by Design Operations:* . . . not known . . . not known . . . not known . . . not known . . .

*Proclamation, November, 1977:* *Valetia*, the official newsletter of *Lords of Valetia*, is at the printer's office at this time and each of you should receive your copy in two or three weeks. We are sorry for the delay . . .

*Proclamation, December, 1977:* Tired of having your friends complain about the way your Peregrinator operates? Do they constantly second-guess your actions? Well, convince them to have their own character in *Lords of Valetia*, and receive two free moves from R,B&S Design Operations INC.

*Letter, Spring, 1978.* It is with deepest regret that I announce to you that we have transferred rights and responsibilities to *Lords of Valetia* to Game Masters Publishers Association. We feel that this company can do a better job of running the game, and that the players deserve

better service than we have been giving them.

At the root of the problem is that we plunged into the August task of completing *Lords of Valetia* (we inherited only a framework) without realizing exactly what we were getting into. At the time, all of us were university students, and as such also had responsibilities to our studies, coupled with all this was our need to work at other jobs in the side, and things turned into a mess.

By now we have gotten our act together; yet I'm sure that most of you are thoroughly tired by the continual delays. Therefore, we accepted G.P.A.'s offer to take over the game, and almost certainly eliminate the delays once and for all. . . .  
(unsigned)

*Review, TSG 13.* This fantasy role playing game was designed by Andrew Baird for his company Ann Varkus. Flyers and a couple of ads in S&T appeared about a year and a half ago, but just as the game was getting underway, Ann Varkus had some sort of financial crisis and went under. The game was picked up by Design Operations, Inc. and after six months, seems to have settled down and started running smoothly. . . . In all, the game shows thought and imagination. . . .

Brian Estensen



*Letter, TSG 17:* Some years ago, I answered an ad in *SPT's Strategy & Tactics* describing a fantasy role playing game called *THE LORDS OF VALETIA* produced by Art Varlos. I never heard a word from Art Varlos or ever saw anything from my \$19.50. About a year later, I did receive a letter from Design Operations, Inc. stating that they had acquired L.O.V. and would be sending me my rules package soon. I never heard any more from them and there had been no return address on the envelope or letter head. . . . Any new and bright group of people trying to get started in the gaming business today will find the road even harder than before because of situations like *LORDS OF VALETIA*. . . .  
Oake Whedbee

*Letter, TSG 18:* I read with interest Oake Whedbee's letter about L.O.V. in TSG 17 and have to admit that it is at least partially right. . . .

Brian Estroze

. . . After Art Varlos folded, RB&B Design Operations followed a very tough road, and there were many delays and forgotten players, of which I was one. Early in 1978 I wrote to them to find out if they wished to transfer the game to GPA and I enclosed a check with my opening figure. To my surprise and later suspicion my offer was accepted without any discussion or price-haggling. An immediate notice was mailed by RB&B so that I was receiving players' orders before I had any of the game materials, which trickled in shortly thereafter. What I received was incomplete and there were no instructions on running the game itself. . . . Art was so anxious to get his game running that he advertised it when it was only half developed material and the adjudication system was all in his head. Out to this, and the large response, he turned it over to some friends (RB&B) who were then college students and not really able to space the amount of time needed. The creative role was left to the creator, and true to form, he procrastinated on every project, producing little. In all of that time (two years thus summed) only one small example of combat had ever been consented to paper. When this was turned over to me, I effectively got 400 players and a few odd materials, and am now forced to design a game virtually from scratch. . . .

W. Elmer Hinton, Jr.

*Proclamation, April, 1978:* The transfer of LoV included all rights and materials for the game, but no money was transferred from the LoV account. . . . I

need about 200 of you to renew your order for these to be sufficient funds for the production of *VALIANCE*. . . . GPA is continuing the offer of 2 free items for your character per new player or character entered, up to twelve. . . . RB&B scored a lot of you. Your files are a mess, so in order to get things back in order, the following information must be sent in. . . . *Valiance* is being planned for May, August, November, and February. Just for your information, RB&B lied months ago when they said it was at the printers. . . .

*Proclamation, July, 1978:* . . . As Steve Jackson says in the latest *SPACE GAMER* "When it began to look as though we'd have to make a choice between 'politized' and 'on time' the deadline went out the window." Since I do not claim to be the equal of *Metagaming* certainly I should be allowed as much leeway in this regard. . . . huge response from the *SPACE GAMER* review has completely depleted Rulebook supplies. . . . The decision to stop the game, rather than waste your money on half-baked turns is a wise one I believe. The total delay should not exceed two or three months. . . . enough of you subscribed so that, financially, the game is solvent. . . .

*Proclamation, March 10, 1979:* It has been a long time that you have been without a word. . . . I have, for the last three months, been looking for invention. . . . The redesign is nearly complete, but without your help it will never see the light of day. What I ask may be hard for you to do, but after trying me once. . . . If the players choose to invest and I collect at least \$15,000 then the game will be run partly by computer, as the new redesigned way, there will be new *Papers of Heritage*, and a *Rulebook*, and *Valiance* will be professionalized. If I don't get the needed amount. The game will restart immediately, run under the old system. . . .

*Valance no. 1 and Kama no. 42, August/October 1979:* This issue contains 5 magazines, *PROCLAMATION*, *GPA JOURNAL*, *TWILIGHT ZONE 7*, *KAISSA 42*, AND *VALIANCE 1*. . . . At last! *Kama/Valance*. You haven't been waiting too long, but what do you expect of a quarterly anyway? . . . December will see the return of regular adjudications for *LORDS OF VALETIA*! . . . I will shortly be returning all those investments collected, as I would be the case if you failed me. You did. . . .

*Full-page advertisement in The Dragon, July, 1980:* Proclaiming the arrival of *THE LORDS OF VALETIA*, Fantasy campaign with thousands of players; Unique system of promotion; Simultaneous movement by correspondence. Imagine a portal which could transport you to a fantastic land of unparalleled beauty and adventure. . . . We publish the quarterly magazine *Valance*. . . .

Gamemasters Publishers Association

*News & Plays, TSG 29:* The *pbm game Lords of Valetia* is once again being advertised. Gamers should be aware that this game has been plagued with difficulties in the past, and that many people have sent money and gotten few or no turns.

*Lords of Valetia Rulebook, copyright 1979 by Gamemasters Publishers Association: Dedicated to the Patient Ones.*

*Valance no.2 (dated 5/27/80):* *Valance* will now be solely dedicated to L.O.V. players. . . . the new computer system means that I may handle 800-1,000 players if I use about 6 minutes a turn. . . . Mediocrity-never again! . . . The Campaign has been completely redesigned, and where before there existed a couple of maps and a few dozen pages of background, there now exist hundreds of maps and pages of background. . . . about the schedule of *Valance*; this magazine will appear irregularly, though I hope it will be quarterly, but this depends on the financial health we gain. . . . Since October, when *Valance* no. 1 appeared, you have doubtless been wondering about the schedule given then. At the time I thought computerization was but a dream, and has planned to restart about the first of the year under the old system but then an odd thing happened. I was forced to work overtime and put in about 65-75 hours a week throughout October and November. This means that by the first week of December I had saved a great deal more money than planned. . . . So, I went out and got a loan, and the computer. . . . the money couldn't be stretched so in February I decided to seek out investors once more - not as investors, strictly, but as partners. . . . One couple responded and provided just enough money to see us through July. . . .

Elmer

*Letter to Steve Jackson, Aug. 16, 1980* . . . I not only noticed a rather aside remark in TSG concerning us, but I have good reason to believe that said remark cost us about 20% of our expected response from the DRAGON. . . . It occurs to me that you will no doubt mention Valetia's past "troubles". . . .

W. Elmer Hinton, Jr.

*Letter to Steve Jackson, Aug 26, 1980* . . . Borrowing from the original LOV concept of modular descriptions, the new LOV uses a computer to store and mix proper configurations of place and event descriptions and prints them out. . . . The speed of the system, and its capacity to store information also results in greater accuracy of adjudication and elimination of inconsistent rulings. . . . Basically, orders are fulfilled the day received, though after registration the assignment of background papers can take 3-6 weeks, and occasionally 8 weeks depending on our volume. . . . The background papers, maps, etc., are roughly 12-30 pages long and completely define your character. Up to 12 pages may have been individually written by the GM for your character. . . . all of those necessary systems have been worked out, and can function efficiently. . . .

Elmer

*Letter to Elmer Hinton, Sept 8, 1980* . . . If you can do what you say you are going to do, it will be a hell of an about-face. . . .

Forrest Johnson

*Letter to Forrest Johnson, Sept. 27, 1980* Go ahead and have reservations. It will be punishment enough to know that when you see the new turns you will sorely chastise yourself for having doubted. I won't try to convince you, you'll just have to see it. . . .

Elmer

*Survey, TSG 33* Gamesmasters Publishers Association is the current owner of *Lords of Valetia*, a game which has not produced a turn in over two years. GPA has been advertising heavily, and promises to start producing turns for a revised and expanded version of LOV before too long. . . .

*Vahance no. 3 (received 11/22/80)*: . . . we have so far made one error, and only one error - but it's a beaut! We blew it but good. You've probably been waiting for it, so it is about time to explain.

While I was getting all these volunteers for Postcards and for programming and so forth, I never once could find a non-player to help me (or even a player close by) who could be of help in writing, and just physically typing the material. As it happens, I use the one-two finger system, as developed by F.L. Hunt, and T.L. Puck. I can about 12 words a minute, no more.

This means that originally, what with Valetia and the new Dials, I sorely underestimated the time needed to process all the old players and the new com-  
toe. . . .

I've been asked to defuse our policy concerning old players. . . . As far as we can tell, the over 400 players we started with, plus the 150 players who paid and were never registered, times the old turn fee, equals about \$11,000 collected by Ann Varian and RMBB. GPA couldn't be expected to make up a credit like that!

As a result we are giving back past credit - but not just for free. A renewal is mandatory. This is perfectly legal, ethical, and proper. . . .

*Advertisement, TSG 25* Proclaiming the arrival of LORDS OF VALETIA . . .

*Letter to Elmer Hinton, Dec. 14, 1980*. I still have not received my first turn in the "new" Valetia. . . .

Forrest Johnson

*Letter to Forrest Johnson, Dec. 19, 1980* You haven't received your first turn because, first, you need your PAPERS OF HERITAGE, and then a postcard for questions and familiarization first, like everyone else, and I know you haven't received your Papers yet.

In any case the main reason is financial. . . .

It seems that one of my potential investors, one [name deleted -FJ], who shall remain nameless, has just decided that he will not invest after all. . . .

When I made the trends and projections for December, back in May, I did so assuming we started with \$3,000, and would be about even by now. At worst, I projected a \$200 negative figure to be made up by a short term loan. At present, I'm \$800 in debt, of which \$500 I need within two weeks. . . .

In any case, the 4th edition Rulebook can't be printed until I pay off the printer (\$2000) what I owe on Vahtance no.3; I have to pay Radio Shack \$200 to get the new Disk Drive or I lose the \$200 already put down on layaway, and my loan company has said that if I don't get them their \$150 very shortly there will be action. What can I say. We can't run off and mail the Papers of Heritage until I can pay to do so. . . .

That doesn't mean that things don't move. I am completing Papers assignments as fast as possible, and I accepted a Honeywell programmer to do one of the large programs I need while I do this. The new Rulebook and Vahtance are proceeding if slowly. . . . I expect to get roughly even by mid February, and on a good keel by April. . . .

Elmer

*TSG undertakes to express no opinion concerning the material reproduced above. The reader is invited to form his own conclusions.*

*In fairness, we must point out that Valetia is in no way unique in its problems. Many PBM efforts have experienced similar difficulties growing off the ground. Some eventually succeed, some smash Valetia's main distinction. In fact, it is that after four years they haven't panned up!*

-FJ/SJ



# WEAPONS CONTEST WINNERS



This contest asked readers to submit original ideas for sci weaponry, we got a lot . . .

First prize (and a 12-issue subscription) goes to Christopher Basting. He sent no less than five weapon ideas, three of which seemed very good.

**MONOWIRE BLADE:** This is an inexpensive alternative to Niven's variable-sword. It requires a lower technology to build and maintain. A superfine wire is stretched between the (reinforced) point and hilt of a scimitar-like sword. The user slashes at the target with the wire edge. The wire cuts into the target at the molecular level, acting as a wedge for the blade, which widens the cut. If the supporting blade is bent out far enough, the weapon will lock more like a sickle, and can be used to cut very hard targets by tearing the sickle-part entirely out of the cutting path.

**SCRAMBLER:** A small (hand-held) ultrasound weapon. Its bore is short (only about 6 cm) but very damaging to organic matter. Easy to conceal (a well-made one can actually be hidden in the hand), and even the cheap models are small, it is a favorite device of thieves and assassins. Placed against the brain and triggered, it kills, used against the spinal cord, it may kill or only paralyze. It can also destroy small locks, erase magnetic tapes, etc. However, the battery will only be good for 3 to 5 shots.

**SKULLCRACK:** A 2 to 3-ounce weight is connected by a flexible, conducting cord to a finger ring. The weight may contain a capacitor, or the ring may be (or be connected to) a battery. Flipped at a person's head, it combines concussive force and an electrical jolt to cause unconsciousness or death. Mainly good for surprise attacks or torturing innocent victims . . .

Second place (6 issues) goes to Craig Buckley, for a rather nasty gadget:

**PHONIC SHURIKEN:** A combination of the "phonic shuriken" (Alan Dean Foster's *The End of the Mirror*) and the Oriental throwing star. The central disk is

a 3 cm piece of metal. When properly activated and thrown, it sprouts six 6 cm "blades" of coherent sound, capable of cutting through most materials. Due to the small power source, the blades only last for about a second, but this is usually time to strike and do damage. For additional lethality, some models can spray a toxin or virus along the blade-arms, in order to infect any wound created by the shuriken.

First runner-up is Steve Condit, with a defensible weapon.

The **GANDEU SHIELD** was developed by a peace-loving but highly technological splinter outfit. Its method of operation is unknown. Physically, it consists of a flesh-colored disk 5 to 7 cm in diameter (usually grafted to the palm or forehead of the user) and a tiny electronic biospinner, which is implanted in the brain or the muscles under the disk. The disk is almost unnoticeable until it is actually used, but in use it glows silver.

Though the theory behind the Shield is unknown, its effects are not. It appears to reflect if will back on the user, creating hallucinations, abject terror, or unconsciousness. This is not an automatic process, it requires attention and practice on the part of the user. A Shield is of no use against a surprise attack. One skilled user can hold off five or six foes. Two users co-operating can handle more than twice as many. Effectiveness of the Shield increases at least geometrically with the number of users.

Important limitations of the Shield are few. First, it is useless as an offensive weapon; an attempt to attack with it will fail and may damage the user. Second, it is useless against other than human-sized attackers. It has no effect on animals or non-human aliens.

Second runner-up was David Green. His weapon was a bit harder to believe, but much more original, than many of the entries.

**ANTI-RESPIRATORY FIELD PROJECTOR.** A hand-held weapon with a range of 30 feet and a maximum duration of 2.5 minutes. It projects a field

which cannot be entered by particles with an atomic weight equal to or less than that of oxygen. Thus, beings it affects will find themselves breathless, and may lose consciousness. (Editorial suggestion: What about a larger, vehicle-mounted version . . . ?)

## Contest

This month's contest, create a non-human race. This may be an intelligent creature suitable for a fantasy mythos, or an alien from deep space . . . use your imagination. Your creation should fit within its mythos — whether that is fantasy, sci, or something else. Colorful details, interesting powers and limitations, likes and dislikes, and/or suggestions for gaming use . . . all these will help.

All entries become the property of TSG. First-place winner will receive a 12-issue subscription, second place gets 6 issues. Space allowing, we may also print one or more runner-up. We reserve the right to award no prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than March 31, 1981.

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# ALIEN

by Andrew Elovich  
and Forrest Johnson

Movie fans will have a hard time forgetting the creature that had the title role in *Alien*. In the movie (and the book), the crew of the ship *Nostromo* found the Alien as a derelict ship in an uncharted system near Zeta II Reticula. They brought it on board their ship where it proceeded to kill all but one of them. This article offers rules for using the Alien as a monster in TPT, D&D, and Traveller.

## Care and Feeding

An adult Alien stands about 5 meters tall. Its black, chrysalis form includes four limbs, a tail (used for climbing) and an elongated head with lots of sharp teeth.

An adult Alien may be regarded as very intelligent. It exhibits considerable curiosity, craftiness, and an ability to learn from experience. However, it will never use any kind of tools or artifacts. It is immune to poison, Sleep, Charm, and all cold-based attacks. It cannot be believe illusions. It is vulnerable to fire, taking +1 damage from any heat-based attack.

The blood of an Alien is highly acidic.

Any metal weapon which damages it will become corroded and useless in one minute. An Alien will regenerate damage (even fire damage) at the rate of one point a minute. However, it will not regenerate if it is killed.

Aliens are very sneaky. They have no treasure, except what their victims may have possessed. Since they often drag their victims back to their lair, some quantity of treasure will accumulate there.

An Alien may be found almost anywhere, but it will tend to establish its lair in a deep cavern, or an obscure chamber in a man. In the lair, one may find a number of leathery cocoons, a meter or so in height. They might be taken for urns or vases.

Inside each cocoon is a large, hand-shaped creature with a retractable tube emerging from the "palm" and a tail coiled beneath it. If a creature of living flesh touches it, the cocoon will become transparent and the hand-shaped Alien may be observed moving inside. If there is still a living, breathing creature of appropriate size within 3 meters, a minute later the cocoon will open and the

hand-shaped Alien will spring out.

The Alien will try to attach itself to the victim's face. It will penetrate a visor (if any) in about 30 seconds. It will wrap its tail around the victim's neck, force its tube down his (or her) throat, and try to subdue him by suffocation.

While the Alien is fastened to the victim, damage done to it will be shared by the victim. When the victim becomes conscious, it will no longer be possible to remove the Alien. However, in 12 hours, the creature will crawl off and die without further encouragement. Two hours later, the victim will wake up. He will be amebulatory, but confused, helpless and very hungry. Within an hour, a pre-adult Alien will emerge from his chest, probably killing him in the process.

The pre-adult Alien is only about the size of a large lizard, but it will grow to full size in about 24 hours, if food is available. (An Alien can eat anything a human can, including other humans.) The Alien will attack almost any creature it encounters. However, it will avoid big parties and creatures twice its size or larger. It will also avoid creatures which look unappetizing: undead, slaves and molds, demons, elementals, and silicious or ethereal creatures.

The Alien may postpone an attack to gain surprise, if possible. It will attempt to pin its victim and then attack with its jaws. But if it is in a hurry, it will use its claws. It cannot make both attacks at once.

If the Alien is hungry (50% chance), it will consume its victim on the spot. Otherwise, it will drag him back to its lair, not caring whether he is dead or only unconscious. The Alien will lay an egg in the victim. In about 24 hours, the egg will grow into a larva, consume the body and form a cocoon. Then, it will wait for someone else to come along....

## TPT

A cocoon stops 3 hits. The skin of the hand-shaped creature within stops an additional 2 hits. It may be considered ST = 4, DX = 13, IQ = 1, MA = 6.

The spring from the cocoon is automatically successful, unless the victim makes a 5-or-better roll vs. adjDX. If he succeeds, the Alien cannot spring again. It is basically harmless, and can be killed at leisure (it will die at a few hours, anyway.)

If he misses his roll, the Alien is on his face, and he will suffer 4 points of exhaustion a turn until his ST is reduced to 1. During this time, he may attempt to remove the Alien once a turn, rolling 5

dice vs. ST. Someone else may try, but only one person per turn. If the Alien is removed, some of the victim's flesh will go with it. He will take 1+1 damage. If the Alien is killed or removed before he becomes unconscious, and he survives the process, he will suffer no further effects.

If the victim becomes comatose, and is not killed, the pre-adult Alien will grow within him. It may be considered ST = 10, DX = 15, IQ = 8, MA = 12. Size stops 4 hits, bite does 1+2, claws 1-1. It will do 4 dice damage when it emerges. It will immediately become competent to feed for itself (no teaching it to walk, no toilet training), and will seek food and a bar of its own.

A fully grown Alien is ST = 40, DX = 15, IQ = 13, MA = 15. Skin stops 6 hits; bite does 3 dice, claws 2. It may be considered to have the following talents: climbing, alertness, acute hearing, tracking, silent movement, tactics, and spying. It may be considered a 1-hex creature for movement purposes, 3-hex for combat.

## D&D

Some elaborations and modifications are necessary for this race.

### Cocoon

Frequency: Very Rare  
Number Appearing: 10-200  
AC: 5  
Move: 0  
Hit Dice: 0  
In Lair: 100%  
Treasure: A  
No. of Attacks: 0  
Damage/Attack: 0  
Special Attack: See Below  
Special Defense: None  
Magic Resistance: Standard  
Intelligence: None  
Alignment: Patient  
Size: S  
Psionic Ability: None

Assuming you hit a cocoon, it is necessary to make a second roll against the creature inside:

### Hand-shaped Alien

Frequency: Very Rare  
Number Appearing: 1  
AC: 7  
Move: 8"  
Hit Dice: 1+2  
In Lair: 100%  
Treasure: None  
No. of Attacks: 1  
Damage/Attack: Special  
Special Attack: Suffocation  
Special Defense: Acid Blood, Regeneration  
Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Non-Alignment: Aggressive  
Size: S

Psionic Ability: None

To dodge the Alien, the victim must save vs. breath weapons with a penalty of 2. He may attempt to remove the Alien once a round by making the same save. (Someone else may roll instead, as per TPT.) Also, he must save vs. poison once a round or become comatose. If the Alien is removed physically, it will do 2 dice damage to the victim. The Alien may also be affected by Remove Curse, but it should be allowed a saving roll. Once the victim is comatose, the Alien within may be destroyed only by a Cure Disease cast by a cleric of patriarch rank or higher. Otherwise you get a.

### Pre-adult Alien

Frequency: Very Rare  
Number Appearing: 1  
AC: 3  
Move: 15"  
Hit Dice: 3  
In Lair: 50%  
Treasure: None  
No. of Attacks: 1  
Damage/Attack: 1d8 (bite) or 1d4 (claw)  
Special Attack: Surprised on 1-2  
Special Defense: Acid Blood, Regeneration  
Magic Resistance: Standard  
Intelligence: Average  
Alignment: Hungry  
Size: M  
Psionic Ability: None

The pre-adult Alien will do 6 dice damage emerging, and will eat what's left if undisturbed. Soon, you will have to deal with an.

### Adult Alien

Frequency: Very Rare  
Number Appearing: 1  
AC: 0  
Move: 18"  
Hit Dice: 10  
In Lair: 15%  
Treasure: A  
No. of Attacks: 1  
Damage/Attack: 4d6 (bite) or 2d8 (claw)  
Special Attacks: Surprised on 1-3, Owe-bearing (*DM's Guide*, p. 73)  
Special Defense: Acid Blood, Regeneration  
Magic Resistance: Standard  
Intelligence: Very  
Alignment: Hungry  
Size: L  
Psionic Ability: None

offer these descriptions.

### Cocoon

Trapper (?)  
Weight: 5 kg  
Hit: None  
Armor: Cloth  
Weapons: See Below  
ADFSO

If you hit the cocoon, it is necessary to make a second roll to hit the creature inside.

### Hand-shaped Alien

Panzer (?)  
Weight: 3 kg  
Hit: 6/2  
Armor: Jack  
Weapons: See Below  
ADFSO

To dodge the hand-shaped Alien, the victim must roll his dexterity or hit on three dice. If the Alien succeeds in attaching itself to his face, he will lose two points of endurance per combat round. When his endurance is reduced to zero, he is comatose. A roll of three dice versus strength removes the Alien, and also does 2 dice damage to the victim. The Alien within may be removed by a surgeon (*Book 1*, p. 20) on a roll of 2 dice vs. his dexterity. A bad roll kills the victim. Low Passage will arrest the growth of the Alien within. If nothing interferes, the pre-adult Alien will do 6 dice of wounds when it emerges.

### Pre-adult Alien - Adult Alien

Hunter  
Weight: 7 kg - 100 kg  
Hit: 10/5 - 35/15  
Armor: Bottle  
Weapons: Teeth (2d6-1 - 4d6)  
Claws (1d6-1 - 2d6+2)  
ATP: 5S2 - A4F8S2

For combat purposes, presume the Alien has Tactics 2 and Zero-Gee Combat 2. It has a skill level of 5 with its teeth, 3 with its claws. To strike with its teeth, it must first make a successful (zero damage) attack with its claws. An individual so struck is pinned and helpless until he makes a roll of 3 dice vs. his strength. He may try once per combat round. (In practice, if he misses his first attempt, he can probably forget all the rest.)

*Note: These rules are based largely on the movie, with some details from the book. The two versions are not completely compatible.*

An alternate set of rules for Traveler may be found in *The Journal of the Traveler's Aid Society*, issue 4.

## Traveler

Briskly juggling apples and oranges, we

# Deus Ex Machina

## THOU SHALT NOT . . .

### (Part II)

by Bruce Webster

Last month I listed the first 5 of the "ten deadly sins of writing computer games." For those of you who missed it, they were:

- to code before you think
- to assume the user has all the knowledge that you have
- not to write proper documentation
- to ignore the strengths (and weaknesses) of the computer, and
- to overestimate the worth of your program.

I also acknowledged my debt to P.J. Brown and his fine book, *Writing Interactive Computers and Interpreters*, from whence came several of these problems. Well, then, are the remaining five sins.

#### Prevent a Game from Being Saved or Cleanly Exited

The first part of this sin - failing to allow the user to interrupt a game in progress and save it so that it can be resumed later - seems to be fairly infrequent, but it deserves mention anyway. It can be rather distressing to be in the middle of a game, having made terrific progress due to your great skills, and then have some interruption (company arriving, class starting, house burning down) force you to quit and start all over again later. This is especially true for games with probabilistic outcomes (since you know that you'll never be able to kill that baling with one blow again) and for multi-player games (since your opponent has now seen your strategy and can anticipate it next game).

This was more forgivable for cassette-loaded programs, but disk-based programs do not have much of an excuse. The only solution here is to plan on making this a feature from the very start and design the game (and resulting program) accordingly.

The second part of this sin - to give the player no clean way of exiting from a program - is unacceptable, and yet I have encountered it in some "daisy" games.

It takes two forms. The first is when the game simply has no "exit" command, and the user must use some system command (control-C, RESET, or whatever) to end the game. The second is when the system dies when the player is done. This is most common in disk-based games that have their own modified operating systems and that crash the system when the game is done (or force the user to do), usually in an effort to protect source code. While the motivation is understandable, the technique stinks.

The solution is a simple one: give the player a command which allows him to end the game. If a reboot of a disk operating system is desired, then ask the player to insert another disk and then simulate the reboot from within the program.

#### Treat Error Handling as an Afterthought

This sin, along with the next three, deals with the failure to make the program user-friendly, "idiot-proof," and reliable. Players are going to make mistakes, and the program has to be designed to allow it to detect and recover from errors as neatly as possible. Unfortunately, checking for errors is often the last part of a program put in, and is often done in haste and is incomplete. This is unfortunate for the developer as well as the player, since many delays in coding and testing would possibly have been avoided if the developer had included error handling in the design from the very beginning.

The solution is, of course, to treat error handling as an integral part of the program and to include it in the initial design.

#### Equate the Unlikely with the Impossible

One of the hardest parts of error handling is anticipating just what the user might do with (and to) the program. One of the deadliest sins is to say, "Oh, no one will ever do that," or, "That'll

almost never happen, so we won't worry about it," simply because you can bet your hard disk that someone will do "that" or that "it" will happen. Here's an example. I was playing Creative Computing's *Saper Avastov* and was down to my last tank. I had eliminated all but one of an avastov force and was trying to hit that last one as it zipped back and forth. I moved out from under shelter, fired, and hit it - just as one of its falling "worms" hit my tank. The result? The game "froze" at that point, and I had to turn off the computer in order to get out of it. Furthermore, the same thing happened two or three times to a good friend who spends more time playing the game than I did. I am almost certain that those involved in developing the program decided that it would almost never happen, if at all, and so didn't bother to check for that occurrence.

The solution is two-fold. First, draw a clear line between the unlikely and the impossible. Know just what is happening at every step and define every possible state at that point. Second, make sure that your program reacts appropriately to the unlikely, somehow. Don't let the program's reaction to such situations be undefined (which brings us to Sin No. 9).

#### Let an Error go Undetected

In some games, you can make an invalid entry or choice of action, or force it into an impossible situation, and the game proceeds cheerfully onward, with results that are often unexpected and usually unpleasant. This situation is made worse when the player isn't aware that he's made an error and is suddenly faced with an apparently irrational program. This is usually in many players' claims that the program is "cheating" and often provokes computer phobia in those users who haven't had enough experience to know that the fault is usually due to laziness on the part of the developer, who didn't consider it worth the time to check all possible conditions at each point in the program.

The best solution here is to design the program so that it is easy to define all possible states at each part in the program, and to code it so that it is easy to check those states. BASIC does not lend itself well to such design and coding (because of having all global variables and not having dummy/formal parameters on subroutine calls, among other reasons), which is why this often crops up. As is true with most of these problems, a few days or weeks of careful design will prevent weeks or months of debugging and maintenance.

## Let the Users Find Your Errors

That is a culmination of all the other sins: to do a sloppy job on a piece of software to be marketed, and then to sell it to consumers without adequate testing and debugging. This seems to occur most often when new firms release their first product; a glaring example of this is EduWare's *Space*, which has a number of errors which could have been detected and corrected with about a week's testing (that's all it took me to find them — and I didn't even write the program). *Space* was EduWare's first effort (see letters column, TSG 33), and they're gone on to produce some excellent software — but as far as I know, *Space* is still on the market, full of the same bugs that it's had for the last two or so years. Unfortunately, there are many other programs with similar problems.

The solution is to avoid problems that cause at: poor design, poor coding, poor testing, and excessive eagerness to make money (i.e., greed). Someone else has recently complained about what he calls KTH's, or "Kitchen Table Hackers," and the software that they produce and sell. The same person commented that there may soon be a backlash among users who are tired of buying software packages that cost a lot and don't

work. In fairness to the home cottage software industry, there are a lot of professional software packages, from IBM on down, which have equally grievous flaws caused by the same four reasons mentioned above. While the field of software engineering is young, there is no longer a real excuse for ignorance among those who would produce professional software (which I define as software that anyone who is going to buy, regardless of whether it was produced on an HP-41C or a CRAY-1). There are lots of seminars and college courses on the subject, and if you don't have the time and/or money for those, there are some excellent texts (two of which I mentioned in my last column).

I have seen all these errors in the many computer games I have played and reviewed, and they are especially irritating in light of the overblown prices charged for most games. However, they will not disappear until market forces are brought to bear, i.e., consumers stop buying lousy software. If you buy a program with bugs in it, I would suggest that you take the following steps:

- (1) Write to the company and/or distributor with a well-documented explanation of your complaint. A

few firms (Automated Simulations, EduWare) now have warranties that cover computer errors, provided you act within the first 1 to 3 months. Unfortunately, bugs don't always show up that quickly, so even if such a warranty period has expired, complain anyway.

- (2) Write to *The Space Gamer* and/or me with a review of the game or a letter outlining the problems you found. If you send in a review, you may even get paid for your efforts. But do something to get the word out before others blow \$20-\$30 on something that doesn't deserve that kind of money.
- (3) An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Before spending your hard-earned money on a game, find out everything you can about it. Look for reviews (preferably two or three) in TSG and other magazines. Find someone who has the game and see it in action. See if your local computer store can demo it for you (which they should do before selling it to you). In short, spend you money carefully.

*Next month will be a guest column by Joseph Power with a utility routine for rolling dice. I'll be back the following issue.*

# THE TRIBES OF CRANE

You look over the Emerald people wandering into of crane or in your great wagon awaiting news from your well searching quindies. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outsiders leap from their mounts to your wagon flustered with excitement. For they know full well the remaining of their lives. But one person to the left in the green and white caravan of the Emerald people has been spotted. The dealer in gems. "Gems. Gems. Gems." You wave your orders. "Gather my captives of hundreds. Let all know the tactics will be profitable right. Now my gems, my mount." You heard that, sure. Chief of the Emerald people has chosen a stand and defend that tactic. Now before will it again? You know also that the Emerald people are live warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no end of the struggle on the west, but rather a mighty clash of the TRIBES OF CRANE.

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The *Tribes of Crane* is a unique correspondence game allowing for interaction between players and the history world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start in the chair of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Carven mountains.

As chief you will know many truths of your people and their lands, but there will be much you have still to learn of the lost secrets of Crane. It will be you who decide if you will remain in their familiar homeland or begin a journey to new lands as you strive to increase your lands, train soldiers and learn of the ancient lost secrets that can make your people fabled prosperity and dominance.

The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the geographical use of the polar regions to the deserts and tropical lands of the equator.

Crane has the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and Kinglets.

The features of Crane are so varied as its geography. Castle, gulls, and the caribou are the many of the tribes depending on the geography. But forests and the great man-eating web hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many unadorned castles, cities, and ancient cities such as the Espansus, a huge borderland that needs to be taken by the warriors of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the opponents, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The games objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria depending upon the type of tribe. And, collect points. Players try to obtain high average points per issue than plus my new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The *Tribes of Crane* may be entered for \$10.50 which includes the first two issues, set up form, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, issues are \$3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased for \$3.50.

# Company Report:

## Fantasy Games Unlimited



FGU is a game company run by gamers. We have never been a development house. We are publishers. Most of our games have always come from free-lance designers. It seems to end up that some of these free-lancers like the way we do things and tend to "stick with us" and do more games for us. Even those designers who have several titles published by us are not employees of the company, but are free-lance designers with close ties to FGU. (But they often feel like employees in that they are often included in policy decision making and editorial decisions.)

From this framework it is easy to see why FGU's games need not have terribly much in common with each other. The only factor we can guarantee they have in common is that we liked them when we played them. As gamers we are involved in role playing, miniature, and board games so that our games will be in all of these categories. Some areas, like WWII boardgames, have been so crowded that many of us find it difficult to get excited over one more game of this kind. FGU does not do WWII or modern boardgames.

Our past direction can be best summed up by the phrase "make it complete!" We always attempted to include any relevant information in our products. This included army organizations and uniform descriptions in our historical or fantasy miniature rules, and everything conceivable in our role playing games. We believe incomplete games are by definition *rip-offs*.

The result of this attitude has been products like *Cavalry & Scurvy*. Some readers will approve of the completeness of the game, while others are frightened by the huge size and seeming complexity of the rules. This is a problem we are only beginning to come to grips with. It appears that gamers can accept a set number of rules if they are introduced gradually over a series of books. But they are overwhelmed by the same number of rules

when they are all provided at one time in a single volume. As gamers, we wanted to keep our prices down and yet cram it all in one book. Were we right? For some games, yes. For others, we were too complete. The end result is that C&S is as often used as a reference sourcebook for other games as it is used as a game system on its own.

Another ongoing discussion has been to look for areas, usually obvious, which are suited to solo play but which have not yet been done. Examples of this are *Gettysburg* and *Shall & Crossbow*. We have been caught off guard a few times when we have a product in the works and a game does come out on the subject prior to our own game. Examples of this are *Land of the Rising Sun* and *Vikings & Vikings*. In these cases we believed the games had to be so good that we published them without worry about the products already on the market.

We've learned a number of lessons from both our mistakes and successes. We have already begun to introduce somewhat easier games to organize. This is exemplified by *Vikings & Vikings* and *Shall & Crossbow*. Yet, we still seek to make the games relatively complete in a single package. Similar projects are in the works for fantasy, science fiction, and the Old West.

Perhaps our biggest mistake is leading to the major change in our future direction. This relates to my personal refusal to market "scenarios." I had always believed that such products were a marketing gimmick as players were fully capable of creating their own scenarios and many would feel almost obligated to buy such products from us since they carried the logo of the game they were playing. I felt that gamers did not really need or want these things, and was I ever wrong. I guess I just didn't pay enough attention to the mail.

We now realize that scenarios assist gamers to fully understand what is intended by a set of rules, and helps a

new gamer to launch a campaign. Once the game is played, it can be enjoyed and the gamer is more sure of getting his money's worth. Anyway, the constant letters requesting such game aids are no longer filling on deaf ears.

We are now working more closely with people like Judges Guild and Gamescience to encourage such game aids. Additionally, we will be releasing similar products of our own as demonstrated by our December '80 release of *Peers of Eight*, an expansion for *Shall & Crossbow* with 3 complete scenarios, 1 mini-scenario, and several additional scenario ideas. Similar scenarios are in the works for *Space Opera* and for C&S and we have already approved the first Judges Guild scenario for *Vikings & Vikings*.

Another change in future direction relates to boardgames. Traditionally, we have released one or two boardgames each year and have stuck to non-WWII subjects. Although we will continue to avoid WWII and modern games, we realize that our limited number of titles has made us a relatively unknown quantity to many gamers who are not involved in solo playing or miniature. Thus, we plan increased boardgame production while continuing to emphasize science fiction and fantasy subjects, as we have done since the company was started in '75. We will also remain consistent in producing boardgames of relatively low complexity.

It must seem strange to some that we have always preferred "complex" role playing games and "simple" boardgames, but this is a reflection of editorial taste. A boardgame should be playable in a single evening. This means learning the rules before saving dinner and playing the entire game in that same evening after dinner, but finishing it in time to make it to work (with a reasonable amount of sleep) the next day.

This year will see the release of two science fiction boardgames (*Dune* and *Genesis*) and one "role playing boardgame" of wagon trains in the old west called *Oregon Trail*. These are already scheduled for release in March, May, and July and there may be more by the end of the year.

Thus, the future direction of FGU will be to continue the types of products that have made us successful and to begin to emphasize game aids for our gamers in response to the demands of gamers. Boardgames will begin to be emphasized to a greater degree as we hope to make ourselves known to more of the boardgamers who are, as yet, unfamiliar with our products.

Scott B. Bear  
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# HYBORIAN RISK

by Lewis Pulsipher



Risk is a simple but popular wargame. Lying midway between the "family" boardgame and the wargame, it presents an abstracted battle for control of the world. To add flavor to the game, many have tinkered with the system, adding more types of pieces and changing the map. One such variant follows. The classic world map has been transformed to represent the fading kingdoms of the age of that mightiest of fictional heroes... Conan of Cimmeria.

Use the standard Risk rules, with these changes:

1. **The Map.** You will need to reproduce the game map shown—a large-sized rough copy can be drawn forthwith in a few minutes. Be sure the relationships between the different countries are correct. Note that these are two different types of dividing lines: solid and dashed. Areas are each named, and are divided by dashed lines. Territories are made up of two or more areas each, and are divided by solid lines. Some areas contain strongpoints, shown by circles.

2. **Initial Placement.** Take armies and place them according to the standard rules of Risk. However, each player should note where his first army is placed. He may not place any subsequent army farther than three areas away unless there is no open area within that range. For instance, if a player's first army goes in Zarkheba, he may not place any armies in Argos, Kombarash, Koth, Khorga, Franktan, Vendiya, or any area farther from Zarkheba than those named. However, if there is no unoccupied area near enough to Zarkheba, he may place his armies in any unoccupied area. After all armies are down, players place their leaders (see below).

3. **Stacking.** A maximum of seven armies is allowed in any area. If a player has seven armies in each area, any further reinforcements are lost permanently. He cannot get more reinforcements until he can place them without violating stacking

limits.

4. **Reinforcements.** In the first round of turns, each player gets three armies as reinforcements. In subsequent turns, players get reinforcements as follows:

(a) **Minimum reinforcements:** Each player always gets at least three armies. (Note that this is a minimum, not a base number.)

(b) **Reinforcements for strongpoint:** A player gets one army for each strongpoint he controls.

(c) **Reinforcement for territory:** A player gets one extra army for each complete territory he controls. For example, if a player holds North Cimmeria and South Cimmeria he would receive three armies: one for the territory and one for each strongpoint. Players cannot share armies for territories jointly occupied.

When a player receives reinforcements, he may place them as he wishes in any area(s) he controls, so long as the stacking rule is not violated.

5. **Cards.** Each time a player turns in a set of cards, regardless of the number of cards turned in in the past, he receives three armies and one leader.

6. **Leaders.** Each player receives two leaders at the beginning of the game (regardless of the number of players in the game). Use the ten-army counters to represent leaders. Properties of a leader are as follows:

(a) Each leader may make a "free move" at the end of the player's turn. This is in addition to his normal "free move" for armies. However, no player may free-move a leader twice in one turn or make a free move that leaves an area vacant.

(b) The presence of a leader allows a player to roll one extra die in combat, up to three for an attacker or two for a defender. Example: A leader with one army could roll two dice for EITHER attack or defense. A leader alone could still roll two dice to defend. In no case may a player ever roll more than two dice

to defend or three to attack; multiple leaders may stack in an area but have no extra effect.

(c) A player may count a leader as an army when taking losses. The player losing the armies has the option to use a leader instead if he wishes. (If there are no armies in the area, of course, leaders must be lost.)

(d) A leader who is attacked, with or without armies in his area, may choose to retreat before combat. Before dice are rolled, he may move to any adjacent area where he has units (or any vacant area). If no such area exists, he must stand and fight. If a leader's retreat leaves an area vacant, the attacking player must enter that area with at least one unit. In no case may a player retreat armies before combat. A leader may fight for several rounds and then retreat, if he survives.

(e) Leaders cannot attack by themselves; there must be an army in the same area; However, a single leader can defend by himself, rolling two dice.

(f) In advancing after combat, leaders move like armies. A player may choose to advance leader(s) instead of armies, if both are an attacking area.

7. **Vacant Areas.** It is possible for an area to become entirely vacant. A vacant area is controlled by no one; any attack on it is automatically successful. Vacant areas may also be entered by free moves or retreats.

8. **Optional Rule: Thoth-Amon and Conan.** If you haven't thrown them out, there are two cards in your Risk deck which can add a little "chrome" to the wargame.

**Thoth-Amon:** The player who draws the trademark card may reveal it at the beginning of his next turn, receiving a special leader—the wizard Thoth-Amon. This Stygian necromancer is like other leaders, except that:

(a) In place of his regular free-move, Thoth-Amon can teleport to any vacant area OR any area where he has units. He cannot use this power to retreat.

(b) Once per turn, Thoth-Amon may make a magical attack. Roll one die. On a roll of 1, 2, or 3, nothing happens. On a roll of 4 or 5, he may remove one army from any adjacent area. On a roll of 6, he may remove two armies OR one leader. Note that neither of these powers can be used except on Thoth-Amon's player's turn.

**Conan:** The player who draws the blank card can turn it in at the beginning of his next turn for Conan himself. Conan is all but invulnerable. If Conan is the attacker, no die roll will eliminate him at all (though if all armies in his area are lost, he must stop attacking that turn).

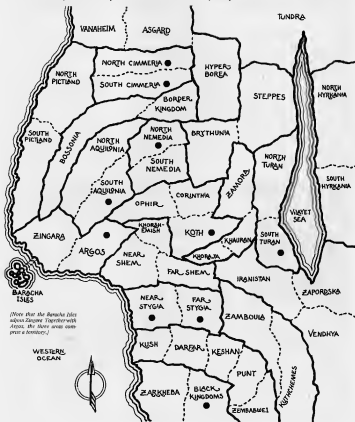
If he is the defender, he will be the last defending unit to be lost. Then, instead of being killed, he merely retreats. He may retreat into any adjacent area which contains units friendly to him, or is vacant. Conan cannot be slain unless he has nowhere to retreat to, or he is killed by

the magic of Thoth-Amon.

Players who have Conan or Thoth-Amon keep the cards unless those characters are lost in combat — the card for that character is then returned to the deck and may be drawn again.

Conan and Thoth-Amon may be re-

presented by different-colored leader counters, coins, etc. In our playtest session, we used Cardboard Heroes for them: 1-2, the Barbarian, makes a perfect Conan, while 1-21, the Elven Wizard, makes a pretty fair black-robed Thoth-Amon.



# Improved Mission Resolution for Freedom in the Galaxy

*Freedom in the Galaxy* is, in my opinion, one of the best SF games to come out of SPI for quite a while, but there are a few things in it I don't like. One of these is the manner in which missions are resolved. Briefly put, one draws cards from a deck, checking one part of the card to see if the mission was resolved and another part to see what event occurred. My statistical experience makes me feel uneasy about this, since it means that the successful outcome of certain missions is linked with certain events. This correlation would allow players to use certain mission-resolution tactics that I feel aren't entirely valid.

My solution to this was to go through all of the cards and determine (1) the probability of each mission being accomplished for each event class (urban,

wild, and special), and (2) the probability of each event occurring in each event class. This resulted in the two tables that accompany this article. I'll explain first how I derived each of the tables, and then show how to use them in resolving missions.

There are only 30 mission event cards in *FiG*, but 2/3 of them have two mission resolution letters per mission, more specifically, there were 51 letters for the urban mission, 50 for special, and 49 for wild. To simplify the table, I dropped one "G" resolution from urban and added one "S" resolution to wild, giving each event 50 letters. By definition, each letter then has a 2% probability of coming up. By grouping all identical letters together, I got Table A.

I took even more liberties with the

by Bruce Webster

events on the cards. There were 30 cards, which meant 30 events (some of which were duplicates) for each event. I decided to add 3 events to each event, making 33 in all, and assign each a 3% probability. This gave me a total of 99%, so I created an entirely new event — "any one mission automatically completed" — which had a 1% probability and thus gave me a complete distribution. To increase "urban," I simply used 3 events that were found in the other events but not in urban. I also did this for two of the extra events in "special" and one of the extras in "wild." For the balance, I simply increased the occurrence of existing events. The result of this is found in Table B.

To use this method, you simply need these two tables (permission is given to photocopy) and some way of generating a random number from 00 to 99 (or 01 to 100, with 100 = 00) — percentile dice, calculator, computers, or whatever. Then for each time you would normally draw a card during the regular mission resolution phase, do the following:

- (1) Roll percentile dice and look up event on Table B; take appropriate action;
- (2) Roll percentile dice, if value is 01-66 then do step (3) twice, else do step (3) just once, this adjusts for some cards having two letters and others just having one;
- (3) Roll percentile dice and refer to Table A to see if any missions were successfully completed.

For the bonus draw phase, you simply perform steps (2) and (3) for each bonus draw (though the roll then only applies to the mission receiving the bonus draw).

This method may seem rather involved, but it works very smoothly in actual play-testing. I have these tables written up on 8 x 5 index cards, and the non-phasing player looks up the results on the tables as the phasing player made his (or her)



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# GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice

## Part XI: Research

by Schuessler and Jackson

"Research" in wargaming is an area where mythology abounds. Consider these statements: "Wargames should be researched." "The library is the best place for research." "Keep your notes on 3 x 5 cards." "Check the card catalogue first." "The encyclopedia doesn't make a good research source." After each of these, we could properly append a firm, "Not true." The myths about research come from stazy sources: your freshman English teacher, the attitude of librarians, offset printing technology and the "print explosion," and the mysticism that surrounds the whole concept of "research" (high tech, Silicon Valley, NASA, and thank tanks).

But in the nuts-and-bolts world of wargame design, there are some basic truths. Research in wargaming is "applied," as opposed to "pure," research. That is, its only reason for being is to produce the wargame. We are not seeking self-enrichment, truth, or new knowledge for our "discipline." Applied research is pragmatic research, its final test is the cost/benefit ratio.

Second, research is very, very expensive in terms of time, money, and usually both. Occasionally we've talked about "faking it," and other kinds of counter-cutting in game development. This kind of discussion may scandalize the parents, but it accurately reflects the problem of research costs.

Third, there is often little correlation between the time and money expended and the research results. A massive research effort (even a well-designed one) can often result in scanty or obvious information. By the same token, some fairly amateurish knocking about may result in gold mines of data.

Naturally, our ideal would be a "full dress" effort, complete with a study design, a full literature survey, a careful editing and reorganization of sources, and footnotes and bibliographical information to prove that it all happened. However, if the ideal isn't practical (it usually isn't) we can at least work on some more ex-

pedient approaches.

### Get There to the Library

Actually, you don't need to go the library right away if you have a home encyclopedia. Your first stop should always be the encyclopedia (*Britannica* or *Americana* only, *World Book* is a comic strip which should be shunned). This will give you a context for your game design, and lead you to some references to begin library-type research. If you're doing a Civil War battle, reading the section on the war will show how your battle fits into the broader situation. If you're doing a game with a medieval setting, the encyclopedia will give the background flavor needed for development. In short, it's the best and most economical introduction you will find.

Now it's off to the library, right? Wrong again. In deference to the librarians, we'll grant that libraries are, by themselves, good things. Repositories of books are one of the few morally neutral things left in our modern culture. However, all libraries are not created equal. Before we waste our hours, we must consider just what it is we seek.

Back in freshman English, Mr. Jones or Mr. Smith extolled the virtues of the library. The point of the course was to get you physically into the library (it's just south of the football stadium), force you to paw over the card catalogue for a while, and to require you to crank out a semi-literate term paper. But that was not research. It was a research exercise, something only marginally related.

Your term paper was fabricated by the availability of library materials. That is, you collected what was available and crafted it into a paper.

Wargame design requires nearly opposite effort. Here, your topic dictates your research. Having decided to do a game on, say, Karak, you must deal with the terrain, the order of battle, and other critical aspects - regardless of whether the library happens to stock such information. It is possible to manipulate the

design to cover gaps in the research; in fact, designers have a term for it: "playability." But the scope to maneuver is very narrow. As I said before, wargame design is applied research.

So before leaving for the library, we first ask: Will our particular library have the materials we need? If you live in a town of 100,000 or less, your library is not exactly the New York City Public Library. There will be fewer works on your topic, and they will be much more general in nature. Research is best done at a research library, and that means a million or more volumes, interlibrary loan facilities, and some heavy-duty references (the National Serials Catalog, for example). Usually you find this kind of establishment in a big city, or at a major research university, or both.

Of course, a municipal operation of moderate size might be useful to supplement your background reading. Or the general works might have some bibliographical information to point you to other sources. The question is whether you want to invest the time for these marginal returns, or immediately move on to other approaches.

### Fiddle and Fiddle

You can waste a lot of time in a library. The larger the library, the more opportunity for waste. Working in a library is very much like assembling a cabinet: eventually you'll get it right, it just depends on how many times you want to do it over.

Before shuffling over to the card catalogue, we should discuss note-taking. The old-timey kind of note-taking that Mr. Smith and your freshman textbook talked about is generally a waste of time. These procedures were developed back when you could only check out three books at a time, and Mr. Xerox hadn't invented his famous machine. Copying down bibliographic entries and long quotes is tedious and frustrating.

### Notes and Copies

If your notes aren't clean, you're wasting your time. Pose a question: Could these notes be used for another game design two years hence? If not, then think of the time that was cut down to make the pencil you wanted.

Whenever you can, check the book out, that will allow you to examine it at leisure. If it's a reference book or unclassified periodical, use the photocopier. (Most libraries keep the costs on their photocopiers low to provide a reasonable alternative to the razor blade. And the researchers that razor books should be stuffed with rods and have their library

cards revoked.) Tables and charts are especially good candidates for the photocopy. Since you're designing a game and not writing a term paper, you need a summary of the facts, not a lot of direct quotes.

#### Stalking the Stacks

Now it's finally time for the card catalogs. But don't write down fifty call numbers. Instead, check the topic under the "Subject" heading and find out where all the books on the subject are located. We're really not interested in individual titles at this point, and we're especially not interested in books that aren't on the shelves. No matter how intriguing the title might be, if it's not there when we are, it's of no earthly use. Of course, you can always ask the librarian to hold it for you. The small fee charged for this is worth it.

Once we get to the stacks, we begin to paw. This involves reading the titles (the click in your neck is a small sensation to the profession), pulling out interesting-looking volumes and thumbing through. We're looking for the scholarly, detailed works that will have enough grit to get us through a game design. As a minimum, there should be an index, bibliography, some maps, and maybe some charts or tables. Slender tomes usually aren't worth bothering with. Another category to be avoided is the "primary source material," i.e., diaries, after-action reports, and most autobiographies. Usually some university-type has digitized these "primary sources" into a more usable "secondary source." No point in doing it over again, even if you had the time and expertise. "Official histories" present a special problem. B.H. Laddell Hart is quoted as saying that the first word cancelled out the second. These "official" works are of some value, but should be checked against other sources.

*If you have access to a really large library, don't overlook the map section. It may be buried - but it's worth searching. You may be surprised at how many maps are available for your area of interest (or how much they differ). Any map can be redrawn, and some (especially the older ones) may not be copyrighted.*

If you're a weekly library goer, your haul should be about four or five books. One a day is quite a load, and may add overdue fines to your cost/benefit ratio. After "how many?" the next obvious question is "what to take?" An ultra-formal type will have a study design all prepared. Lacking this luxury, we can say, as a rule of thumb, that research moves from the general to the specific. The first shot should be at the broad over-

views of the game: mapping, terrain, order of battle, unit characteristics, etc. As you move along, the research should narrow down to fill the specific gaps in the design.

#### Book Stores and Book Clubs

The great advantage of the library is that (except for photocopy costs) the most you can waste is time. All of the other research sources involve cash, and must be approached more carefully. In the past few years, the prices on books has made this source even more hazardous. During the '70s, a scholarly work came in at the \$15-20 range. Now we're seeing the really good stuff moving up to the \$30-40 level.

I approach the purchase of a book with an elaborate ritual that is designed to "prove" to myself that I really need the thing. First, I never buy a book on the first or second visit to the bookstores, I look at least twice. Second, I try to limit my purchases to what I would consider "infatuate material" - sources of a highly technical nature. I deliberately avoid things with too much commentary or too many photographs. Whenever possible, I try to get the book at the library for a pre-sale examination. And, of course, I buy the paperback edition whenever it is available - even if it involves a special order.

One very irritating class of books (especially for the wargames) is the "Christmas slip-off." These oversized, over-priced things have flashy jackets, very common photos, and usually an abysmal text. Their tag derives from the fact that dear old Aunt Mamma, knowing of your peculiar hobby, thought that it would be the perfect thing at Yuletide. A waste of shelf space.

Two alternatives to new books are used books and the book clubs. Of these, the used book store is the safest proposition, you get everything you get at the full-priced place, except the price and the availability. Book clubs require a bit more finesse. The main drawback is, you buy before you look. I make it a point never to buy the "featured selection." And I try to examine the "alternates" at the library before purchase. Still, I consider The Military Book Club (Garden City, New York, 11530) to be one of the real unusing houses in the hobby, offering probably the best bargains around.

#### Games and Gaming Magazines

A third alternative is other wargames and gaming magazines. Certainly, you should at least be familiar with the other titles - a sort of "literature survey." The rules, maps, and designer's notes are all a

vald research source. (At this point we'd avoid discussing plagiarism and copyright law.) (And observing what a *previous designer MISSED* can be as instructive as checking over what he included.)

Gaming magazines have the advantage of specializing in game-oriented articles. They're a good bet, if you can find an article on your area of interest. Gaming mags are usually as well written as their more scholarly counterparts, and (disclaimer) are relatively low-priced considering the scope of the material.

*Other magazines can help, too - have what the Guide to Periodical Literature II and how to use it. If your project is a modern-period game, the various news-magazines, science magazines, and whatnot will be of assistance. If you're working on WWII, think about National Geographic. And if you know what you're looking for (or have the time to browse), there are LOTS of fantasy and SF magazines sitting around to provide inspiration for the designer in that area.*

#### Bell, Book, and Candle

Finally, we should note the virtues of not searching a wargame. No library, no bookstores, no gaming magazines. A low-complexity design by a person who has been reading casually in the subject area for many years may not require anything more than what's already in the grey matter and on the home library shelf. In any number of cases, the outfit trip to the library and bookstores isn't really going to add very much. You know just about what you want to do, and just about how you want to do it. Why bother wasting the hours to get to an identical result?

*This can be especially true in SF and fantasy gaming. Big and large, the audiences for this genre are less interested in any form of "reality," and won't recognize a silly glitch or care about it if they notice it. Thus we get games where should make you 5% harder to hit, or SF epics where one arm (doubt which many things happen) works out to 1/30 of a second. "Stealing" the wheel for totally unfamiliar has its advantages.*

What's going to make a game design "work" is the combat system and the playtesting. The purpose of research is to enhance the basic feel and accoutrements. All the research in the world won't redeem a bad combat system; no amount of research can be substituted for playtesting. In the end, applied research must be applied, and bad games with footnotes is still a bad game.

# Capsule Reviews

**THE SPACE GAMER** reviews board games, role-playing games, computer games, video games, and game supplements. We review play-by-mail games if a reviewer is enrolled. We will review any science fiction or fantasy game if the publisher supplies a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical wargames. TSG may publish a review of a game we are not sure — IF a reader submits a review.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

Games for which reviews have been assigned or received include: *Acts of Death*, *The Assassins Charterbook*, *The CSS Searchbook*, *Darkboard Heroes*, *D&D Dungeon Campaigns*, *Dark Arcane*, *Expert D&D*, *The Hammer of Thor*, *One-Pager Rules*, *Perimeter V*, *Seven of Nine*, *Star*, *Swords & Sorcery*, *Thieves' Guild*, *Voyage of the Foundation*, and *Warlock* (Games Workshop).

Specific games for which we are seeking reviews include *Apocalypse*, *Dark Stars*, *Dr. Who*, *Kane IV 2150*, *Nebula 19*, and *Star Fleet Battles* (board of).



**CITADEL OF BLOOD (GPO)**, \$6.00. Designed by Eric Smith. One 8 1/2" x 11" 12-page rulebook, 200 die-cut counters, 3 dice, board. One to six players, playing time 2-3 hours. Published 1980

**CITADEL OF BLOOD** uses the game-system of *Darkness*, and characters and background from *Swords & Sorcery*. It is a dungeon adventure fantasy game which can be played solitaire. It is a boardgame without a board, the maze is made up and populated during play from randomly-allocated tiles.

**CITADEL OF BLOOD** is quick, simple, and fun. The maze changes every game. The players have a definite objective, as opposed to just wandering around fighting monsters. (They are trying to destroy the Hellgate.) The play-balances is very good, and the game usually covers right down to the wire. Also, several magic spells are added to those of *Darkness*. The

rules are complete and well-written.

The biggest problem with **CITADEL OF BLOOD** is that it is so much like *Darkness* that some gamers will feel ripped off. The two games have nearly identical rules and tables, and a very similar flavor. Also, gamers should be aware that these two games, being short and simple, do not have all the color and detail of a larger FRP game.

**CITADEL OF BLOOD** is recommended to fans of *Darkness* and to fantasy gamers who want something to play when they don't have the time for a bigger game.

—Keith Green

**THE EMERALD TABLET** (Creative Wargames Workshop), \$6.95. Designed by Joseph Mitchell, Tom Leback, and Jay Fancello. One 8 1/2" x 11" book with separate play and sheets. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1977

At first glance this set of fantasy miniatures rules has everything the player could want: comprehensive rules on selection and handling; virtually any army from before the Thirty Years War, detailed battle magic rules, and an extremely realistic combat system based upon the cumulative advantages one unit has over another. Unfortunately, the rules suffer from just three attractions: There is simply too much to absorb, too many charts and statistics, too poorly organized and presented.

There are two bright spots in the game: the unit creation and command magic systems. Units are "purchased" according to units assigned for various levels of characteristics such as height, weight, weaponry, experience, and so on. There is even a cost for "occasional wounds." You can create units as diverse as King Tut's spearmen, Darna's sphinxes, or Agamemnon's panthers. You can also use the system to quantitatively compare units when designing new units.

As good as the unit creation system is, it is inferior to the command magic system. Separate cut-out sheets yield magic circles, talismans, dances and spells from the magical pomegranate. Just as in the previous, casting spells is serious and risky business, as suchcasters can go mad. It is realistic, it is colorful, and it requires a player succeed solely to handle the magic. Consequently, although the game is designed for two players, it requires two team players.

By itself, **THE EMERALD TABLET** is too complicated and requires too much effort to be enjoyed by anyone but the most hardcore gamer. However, given the main competition, TSR's *Swords and Spells* and Chausson's **THE EMERALD TABLET** is clearly superior. If you want a game that can show what magic was like under the tutelage of Albertus Magnus or with the Key of Solomon, this is your game. If that's not what you want, stay well away.

—Glen Williams

**KNIGHTS AND KNAYVES** (Narrow Game Development), \$10. Designed by Albert NoL. Board, with 17" x 21" paper mapboard, 300 die-cut counters, 8 page rulebook, die, 4-10 players, playing time indefinite. Published 1975

**KNIGHTS AND KNAYVES** attempts to simulate "the intricate relationships of the lords and vassals of a large, loosely organized Empire located somewhere in Central Europe during the High Middle Ages." There was no such empire, assuming a game is played to completion, the richest, the strongest, and the most landed each are declared victors.

**K&K** is 60% of a very good medieval simu-

## ABBREVIATIONS

AC = action chess  
 AD&D = *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*  
 AIE = The Avalon Hill Company  
 APA = amateur press association (sometimes within point allowance)  
 BEM = bagged monster  
 CHA (or CHR) = chessmen  
 CON = construction  
 CFM = cost of points monster  
 c p = counter points(s)  
 CR = credits  
 C&S = *Chivalry and Sorcery*  
 CRT = combat results table (sometimes with die, 1 s., TV screen)  
 d = die (306 means three 6-sided die)  
 D&D = *Dungeons and Dragons*  
 DM = dungeon master (sometimes die notation)  
 DX (or DEK) = accuracy  
 EMP = end high point  
 e p. = experience points(s) (sometimes electronic points(s))  
 EPT = *Empire of the First Throne*  
 F&W = Fantasy Worlds, Inc.  
 FGL = Fantasy Games Unlimited  
 FRPG(s) = fantasy role-playing game(s)  
 GAMA = Games Manufacturers Association  
 GDM = Games Designer's Workshop  
 GM = game master  
 g p. = gold piece(s)  
 h p. = hit point(s)  
 HITK = hit to kill  
 IQ (or INT) = intelligence

K = kilobytes of memory  
 LGM = little game man  
 LK = luck  
 MA = movement allowance (sometimes magical/military/tactical/spell(s)/ability)  
 MR = monster rating  
 MU = magic user  
 NPC = non-player character  
 OSG = Operational Studies Group  
 OSE = One Session(s)  
 P&M = play by mail  
 PET = Personal Electronic Transactor (by Commodore)  
 POW = power  
 RAM = random-access memory  
 ROM = read-only memory  
 SAT = Strategy and Tactics  
 SF&F = science fiction and fantasy  
 SZL = size  
 s p. = sheet points(s)  
 SPI = Simulations Publications, Inc.  
 SR = strong roll (sometimes strike roll)  
 ST (or STR) = strength  
 T&T = *Tunnels and Trolls*  
 TFG = *Tank Force Games*  
 TFF = *The Fantasy Trip*  
 TFS = *Tomb Raider* book  
 TSR = TSR Hobbies, Inc. (formerly Tattered Studios/Keio)  
 UPP = Universal Personality Profile  
 WS = wisdom  
 ZOC = zone of control





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**MAGE.** Long and thoughtful preparations went into developing the concept. Some very nice teachers have been included, such as the possibility of one player's (read "pope") cross-measuring another, or a noble's inability to attack another noble because of an untested-for marriage.

The game has severe problems, however, the most glaring of which is the awful graphics. The map is done in five colors, light gray, dull blue, dull gray-blue, bright red, and dull red. There is a minimal indexing system (on a separate sheet) to help locate 66 arbitrary units, some of near-microscopic size. Possession of specific blocks of terrain enables a player to exert power — you have to find a separate listing of which colors they are. Sighs, since they aren't marked on the board. All of the terrain are black and white. Have you ever tried to play a multi-player game with 150 D&W counters as a one-square-foot area?

The other major problems is its verbose rule sets, particularly in the combat system. Of all objects are possible, yet the counter table only lists results for rolls of one to six. Much joggling about is possible during the combat phase, but when the smoke clears, it is often difficult to detect any change. The only way to capture a noble or his troops, much less kill them, is to bankrupt him first. This is difficult when he only averages a one- or two-percent loss in treasure per combat defeat.

K&K was obviously stepped down to make it a \$10 game. For a little more, it could be an excellent \$12 game I wish the effort had been made.

—David Ladyman

**MAGE** (Aurivoren Games, L14), \$5.95. Designed by Will Buckham, Mage is a role of Antebellum Game System, One 42-page 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" rulebook. Number of players and playing time variable. Published 1980.

If a co-designer of C&K, MAGE is intended to supplement an existing fantasy campaign, or be used separately as rules for magical combat.

There are three associative features. First in the way play-changers advance an ability called "experience," the method has no connection with money-losing or treasure-finding. Over a game year, the player makes a die roll to increase an ability and, as a bonus for the brave and lucky, may be allowed an "extraordinary performance" check over often. Second, the concept of "traits," where a character may increase his chance of success by taking a "stress check." If successful, he gets a one-time bonus; if not, he takes varying amounts of damage. Third, clerical magic is related to the relative power of the particular god that the cleric worships. The rankings and abilities of the gods are decided by the referee and player.

The spells listed in MAGE are the old D&D spells with some of the names changed in a campaign, the magic will be "heavy weapons" for the fighting men. Magical skills tend to be short and bloody.

The main problem with MAGE is that it requires a thorough and imaginative referee. Some such referees are always in short supply, using MAGE as your campaign is likely to be more disappointing. On the other hand, if you use it for the one-on-one magical combat, it

promotes all the excitement of the hot Dwarves' Lizardon fight.

—Clayd W. Wells

**SHOOTING STARS** (Yaqueto), \$16.00. Designed by Stephen Feck. Box includes 20-page rulebook, 21 1/2" x 3 3/8" paper map, a game table mat, a sheet of die-cut counters, four cardboard "control consoles," 8 step specification cards, and two dice. One to Sixty(4) players, playing time 30 minutes to thirty(4) hours. Published 1980.

**SHOOTING STARS** is a tactical game of space fighter combat. Except for Frig weapons, all 16 game base pieces are played on a truncated "control console" before any movement takes place. The advanced game is basically the same but introduces a more complex console which includes energy factors, docking fees, vision, tactical maneuvers, shields, and more.

**SHOOTING STARS** is a good game. The rules are quite clear and obviously well planned. The advanced rules add complexity without slowing the game down or making it difficult to understand. If you want increased realism at the expense of playability, there are optional rules for different weapon types, hidden movement, and time dimensions.

Though there are minor flaws, the rules are very clear by comparison to earlier Yaqueto games. A couple of the counters are missing some information and the advanced CRT is missing one line in its legend. These flaws are easily remedied. The only fuzzy part in the rules is the number of directional changes allowed per turn. The basic rule simply that up to 9 each of left and right turns may be made while the advanced rule states that 9 is the total permitted. The biggest problem with the game is high cost and mediocre component quality. It just doesn't measure up to other Yaqueto games. At \$7.00 the album series games have better components than **SHOOTING STARS** does at \$16.00. The Milky Way background on the paper board may be aesthetically pleasing, but it makes making some of the bases impossible. Many of the playing pieces must be cut out of cardstock with utmost care. Also, there are not enough advanced control consoles for some scenarios.

As I and below, **SHOOTING STARS** is a good game. If the price was at the \$6.99 to \$12.00 range, I would highly recommend it. As it stands, the buyer must decide if it's worth to pay for rules at the expense of component quality.

Gregory Covert

**TIMELAG** (Greenleaf, Inc.), \$3.95. Designed by Mike Vande. Includes 4-page rulebook, 9" x 14" map, 125 die-cut counters, 2 "set of tech" tracks, bagged, 2 players, playing time 1-3 hours. Published 1980.

**TIMELAG** is a strategic science fiction game with each player representing a civilization at war with the other, for no apparent reason. What makes **TIMELAG** different is that velocity has an effect on the play. Weapons cannot go faster than the speed of light, but can approach it, causing a time dilation. Movement is via boxes or warp jumps, with the latter occasionally resulting in "buster." Each box move or jump takes 5 years in relation to the home star and also moves the ship in another 5 years behind an current technology. When opposing forces meet in combat, combat skill will know how technically advanced (or behind) his opponent is in relation to his base. Combat factor is calculated by multiplying the ship's combat value by the technical level and subtract-

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ing its age. Ships can become somewhat stronger by "hunting," but in general, the higher the tech level, the greater the combat factor. Higher tech levels also have a movement advantage. A player wins by capturing his opponent's horse spies or by controlling 13 other systems.

**TIMELAG** is a good strategy game of the "intrigue" type. It is based on the award-winning novel *Forever War* by Joe Haldeman. It is simple and easy to learn but has enough strategic possibilities to warrant many plays.

**TIMELAG** does have a few minor problems. The map has a B-system and a Beta system that is also abbreviated as B. Economic points are determined by die roll, so that a few lucky die rolls could have a disproportionate influence on the game. The tech levels only go up to seven. The rules itself will be considered a little better.

I would recommend **TIMELAG** to those who like macro-type games.

—Robert Desjar

**VALLEY OF THE FOUR WINDS** (Games Workshop), £20. Designed by Lewin Dufayler. Based with 16-page rulebook, 16" x 22" board mounted in two parts, 140 tiles, 48-64 counters, 1 die, and a 20-page, episodic short story. Two players, playing time 5-6 hours. Published 1980.

Ferocious, an island of good wealth in a sea of evil, is being by seduced to the east, manipulated to the southeast, the forest overt to the west, and the dragon and pheromorphs (ugh) to the north. Fortunately, the Goodwar happens, in the southern Golegaur Forest, are finally. The faces of good must hold out at bay, occupying the air replacement center while simultaneously eliminating all defense troops from the board. Evil's objective is to

take and hold the city of Farrowell for two turns.

I enjoyed the game. The play balance is good. To quote from the game booklet, "There are numerous strategies open to both players, but it is not easy to discern which is best as the strategies must be adapted according to the variable built into the game."

The game has a lot of chrome, mostly in accord with the various twists and turns of the story on which it is based (originally published as *White Dwarf*). An attempt was made to index the exceptional rules involving special pieces. I very much appreciate it, even though the index didn't catch them all. The graphics are colorful, pleasing, and very clear, the board is well done.

My objections are, on the whole, minor. Given the many special counters, frequent reference to the rules is required and you can remember them. You must follow somewhat arbitrary steps to accomplish some major goals. (This follows, again, from the specific items of the story.) Finally, too much of a relatively small board is off-limits to too many units.

**VALLEY OF THE FOUR WINDS** suffers from being a British import, it is probably worth \$16.50 (the price in England), but the cost runs to \$20 in the U.S. If you enjoyed the short story, by all means buy the game.

—David Ledman

## SUPPLEMENTS

**THE KEEP ON THE BORDERLANDS** (TSR), \$5.00. Designed by Gary Gygax. Supplement to **D&D**, 38-page 8 1/2" x 11" booklet with 17" x 11" map/cover. Two or more players, playing time indefinite. Published 1980. This module is for both beginning D&D and

players, both experienced players with low level characters can fit in. There are 11 pages of information for the DM. This includes first level spells, how to make a floorplan, tips on DMing, and more. The module is interesting and full of excitement. The players are obviously expected to create their play around the keep, a huge feature. There are lots of monsters in and around the keep, bachelors, orcs, kobolds, lizard men, and more. For real playability, the players should take more than one wizard into the . . . well, I'm not supposed to tell you about that.

The problems are few, and unimportant. The map is done rather sloppily, with forest, canyon lines, roads, etc. all represented over the lower levels. Also the Cover of Chaos is in the book rather than on the map itself.

But on the whole, I enjoyed this module and I recommend it.

—Kathy T. Griffin

**STAR FLEET BATTLES EXPANSION KIT NO. 1** (TFG), \$4.95. Designed by Steven V. Cole. Supplement to the board game of *Star Fleet Battles*. Contains a 56" x 81" rule booklet, 56 die-cut counters, data sheets, bags. Two or more players, playing time 5-6 hours. Published 1980.

SFB is a space tactical game based on Star Trek, where you control, in some detail, the operation of one or more starships. The kit has many errata and rule clarifications based on the board set. Also included are 30 new ship types with two new stars (Hydrius and Andromeda) and six new kinds of weapons. Eight scenarios and two mini-campaign games integrate the new features into the game. Credits based on "that movie" are featured.

The errata and clarifications actually clear up quite a few problems from the board edition of SFB. Some of the new ships are very nasty (the Romulans now have a dreadnaught) yet play balance is still maintained. All of the new scenarios now come with decent tactical hints.

My only complaint was that the kit's publication was delayed several months after it was first advertised.

If you play SFB, I highly recommend this expansion kit, if only for the errata.

—Earl S. Cooley III

**WHITE PLUME MOUNTAIN** (TSR), \$5.00. Designed by Lawrence Schick. Supplement to **AD&D**, 12-page 5 1/2" x 11" booklet with 17" x 11" map/cover. Two or more players, playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

This module is essentially for fifth to tenth level characters. The background is interesting. Knapka, a supposedly long dead wizard, has stolen three powerful magical weapons from three government dealers. You, as the player, have been hired to get them back. All you have to help you is a magic power . . .

I greatly enjoyed both playing and DMing this module. It is different from most in its nature of organization. It is a more believable module than most. One can envision mountains, sea lochs, castles, giant rats, rangers, and many traps. I should be thank of being a character in this campaign. It is rocky, but fun. It tests playing skill very well. Servers should give a level and some treasure.

This is on the whole a very good module. There are no real flaws. One might note its shortness — (31 pages) — but this is no problem. Much is fitted into these few pages of text. I recommend it.

—Kathy T. Griffin

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## COMPUTER GAMES

**ANTS** (Synthetic Solar, Inc., P.O. Box 164093, Miami, Fla. 33116); \$14.95. Cassette for the TRS-80 Level II Model I. Six speed levels and three different playing fields. One or two players, playing time 10 minutes. Cannot be saved. Published 1983.

One queen prowls over the top of the board while her opponent queen robs at the bottom. Every turn each queen gets to produce one kind of antiques in variable numbers. The offspring may be made, stolen, have more nests, crawl, soldier, wander into workers, and finally, the "all offense" dromes. The offspring fight it out in the center of the screen as the speaker emits a series of pipes and pops. The first person to fatally wound his opponent's queen or overrun his enemy's nest wins.

The game is very easy to learn and there are a large number of good tactical options available. It takes a long time to learn what is best to produce when, and the game never gets boring.

The problems I see are mostly a matter of taste. You have NO tactical control whatsoever. Your best bet plus can go astray as the guards you throw out screen the wrong side. Further, the game does seem susceptible to optimizations.

Overall, I'd say this is a super game for kids but the serious gamers had best look elsewhere. —J. Minkov

**ATLANTIC BALLOON CROSSING** (The Software Exchange), \$9.95 cassette, \$14.95 disk, 16K program for the TRS-80 1-13 players, playing time 30-120 minutes. Published 1979.

This game places each player in control of a gas balloon in an effort to cross the Atlantic Ocean from Canada to Paris. If the player can survive the crossing without going down in the ocean, he has achieved a minor victory. The real goal is not only to get across in the shortest possible time, but also to land as close as possible to Paris. It's not so easy as it sounds. As pilot of the balloon, the player is given 140,000 to 160,000 cubic feet of gas and about 7,000 pounds of ballast which he can release to control the rise and fall of the balloon. The balloon pilot also has a radio, which only functions at certain times, to get reports on the weather and the balloon's position. It is not possible to cross in a straight line. The pilot must make the balloon "ride" a high pressure system across the North Atlantic to the balloon must make an arc across the map. The direction in which the balloon travels is solely controlled by the wind, the direction of which varies with altitude. Also, the balloon will rise and fall in the course of the day because the sun causes the gas volume to go up.

The game has very attractive graphics. The map appears almost instantly in spite of the many peaks, mountains, and the other display shows the player's balloon as it crosses the ocean and has readings of all significant instruments such as barometer and thermometer. The game also provides each player with a great challenge. The pilot of a balloon must anticipate weather and wind conditions and consistently make decisions about how to adjust for them, if at all.

I feel that this game is well worth the money. It provides a challenging multiplayer or infinite game which is difficult to optimize. —Joseph Searles



**METATREK** (The Alternate Source, 1806 Ada, Lansing, MI 48910), \$19.95. Disk by Brandon Ragny III for the TRS-80 Level II Model I. One player, playing time 3-5 hours. Can be saved. Published 1980.

This is the latest and perhaps the best of the original "Trek" programs. By original I mean so sound and not real time. The mission is to explore 256 quadrants, claim as many of them as possible, while destroying as many alien races (and Klingons) as possible. Your vessel is given the usual assortment of weapons, despoils bolts (i.e., torpedoes), beam lasers, and computer aids. Your support and rescue is derived from a score of star bases that can repair and supply you.

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Why do I say perhaps the best of the original? Perhaps because the program takes all of the race ideas that have appeared over the years and combines them into a scrutable game format. I particularly like the economic elements. The materials list that can mine, the best ways you can create and then fly through (at your peril), the wonderful evaluation at the game's end. The clever "defense reports" after the economic phase in an ever-changing way. The complete phase a valuable rule and I much appreciate being able to save a long time like that.

Still, I feel there are weak spots that could well be corrected. The bats only go out on multiples of 45 degrees. The flight paths are somewhat constrained in terms of choosing angle paths. The chance of being destroyed during the course of the game is quite good (which is fine) but that always seems to generate an error setting.

All in all, I would say that for those interested in a first rate original-Treky-style game, this fits the bill nicely.

—J. Minkov

**ROUND THE HORN** (The Software Exchange), \$9.95, 16K cassette for the TRS-80, 1-3 players, playing time one hour. Published 1979.

In this game each player becomes the pilot of a clipper ship in the late 19th century. His instructions are to sail his vessel from New York City, around the tip of South America, and north to San Francisco in the shortest possible time. As pilot of the ship, the player is given control of the rudder and instruments which provide information about position, heading, and wind speed. The players rotate in seven day turns. During his turn, a player sees on the screen what a captain of a real ship

would use, including a view of the position of the sails, the bow of the ship and the ocean beyond, and all of the instrument readings. Nevertheless, the ship is not simply a matter of pointing the ship in the right direction and watching the ocean. The player must often deal with strong headwinds, deceptive currents, and even icebergs.

The graphic displays are very well done. Both the map and the view of the ship are attractive and functional. The game is also very challenging. Simply sailing the voyage around Cape Horn is difficult. But the real challenge is to do it in as little time as possible.

One note that should be made is that although the integral map of the western hemisphere is accurate to within one or two degrees latitude or longitude, the map which appears on the screen is not. Therefore, it is a good idea to have a good globe or world map on hand while playing the game.

ROUND THE HORN is a challenging game which is an interest of all those economic games and the simplistic arcade games I highly recommend it.

—Joseph Sacher

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### PLAY-BY-MAIL

TRAJAN'S TRACHEROUS TRAP (F&D); \$5.00 set up, \$7.00 per turn. Designed by Rick Loomis. Play-by-mail FRPG. Started 1979.

TTT is a simple play-by-mail game patterned after the Flying Buffalo's solitary dangers. The player guides a single character around a very dangerous dungeon in search of an exit. Each turn, a single letter option is written down on a pre-paid card and sent in. Results come back in about two weeks.

There isn't much good to be said about this one. Each turn represents the turn of a page in a solo dungeon. The only real difference between this game and a solo is the "score of the above" option, which lets you win if your own system. The costs are \$3.00, and don't always work.

Oh, yes, there's a pun. Everyone who gets out wins an unspecified prize. The first one out wins a grand prize, a fictitious solo dungeon, Sorcery's Associates, or Starweb subscription. I can't really recommend TRAJAN'S TRACHEROUS TRAP, unless you're rich, can't find anyone to game with, and find that no one will sell you any of the numerous solo dungeons available.

—Stefan Avanz



### HISTORICAL GAMES

AIRWAR '50 (SPD); \$19.00. Designed by David C. Iley. This is the updated version of *Armer*, including new planes and some new rules. Comes with 64 pages of rules, 32 pages of charts and tables, 8 perspective map sections, 16 "scenario control sheets," 100 counters, and 2 dice. Two players; playing time 2 hours to all day. Published 1980.

This is a truly amateur game dealing with air combat in the modern world. Players control from 2 to 8 jet aircraft. The aircraft control display shows the status of the jet, speed, altitude, missiles remaining, etc. Each turn these are adjusted by the player at his aircraft's maneuver.

Impressos. The aircraft available to the player range from MiG-15's to B-1 bombers. Each aircraft type has its own capabilities, special characteristics, etc. Missiles and counters are similarly treated.

However, the very mass of data needed to play slows the game down badly. Playing out a 5-minute flight can easily take 2 hours. Three scenarios around 15 minutes each. Scenarios with more than 6 or 8 aircraft are unwieldy. And searching the rules for the one rule you're looking for is meretricious. Luckily, the rules are arranged so that they can be absorbed in several large chunks.

As a simulation, AIRWAR '50 is of high quality. If you have the cash and the interest in jet combat, you might buy it. Anybody else should skip this one.

—Craig Barber

ARMOR AT KURSK: THE BATTLE OF PROKHOROVKA (formerly Prokhorovka; *Armer at Kursk*) (TTC); \$3.50. Designed by Steve Cole. Ziplock, with one 36-page "96" x 86" padlock, 108 die-cut counters, one 168" x 216" map, and one CRT-unit setup card. Two players; playing time one to two hours. Published 1979.

One of the best-kept secrets in WWII was the battle of Kursk. It was only in the early '70s that Kursk, not Stalingrad, was recognized as the real turning point of the war in Russia. Stalingrad determined that the Germans would not win. Kursk determined that they would lose. Cole's design puts the SS Panzer Corps against the 5th Guards Tank Army at Prokhorovka, the largest tank battle of WWII. It's a unique out/over combat at the battalion/battalion level. No DOK, no stacking — just move/light, move/light. The Germans are trying to get to the far side of the map, and the Soviets are trying to stop them. The emphasis is on action and plausibility, and Cole has given us a respectable alternative to the headshots of voluminous legistic rules and elaborate play sequencing.

The terrain features split the map into three lanes. The Germans are pretty well stuck in their lanes, but the Russian can switch among reinforcements from lane to lane. The chrome is unusual special artillery rules and some abstracted air support. The simplified system and the differential CRT keep the turns moving at a good clip.

Impressos include a distorted game scale, i.e., battalions with 400 men/bac. That would be quite a fit — and its combat formation, no less. The terrain differentiation is poor in relation to the scale. We get forests, rivers, two small hills, and roads. The railroad embankment and the River Pso make the lanes. But Cole says he was working for playability, and no doubt additional terrain types would have involved some "dirt."

SP1 alerted this foolishness of re-iterating with *Reds/The Big Red One*. Goodness knows why a nice respectable company like TTC would want to follow suit. Anyhow, ignore the name nonsense, appreciate the reasonable price, and give KURSK/PROKHOROVKA for the many Sunday afternoon when the thought of one lone cycle of War in the Pacific turns your stomach.

—Nick Schwantz

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## PUBLICATIONS

**FANTASY MODELING** (Fantasy Modeling, Inc., 435 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10016), \$8.99/year (4 issues), Editor Philip O. Stearns, 34-page 8 1/2" x 11" magazine. First issue 1980.

**FANTASY MODELING** is a new, slick paper magazine concerned with wargames, RPGs, miniatures, and science fiction plastic models. A large field, to say the least. But the first issue holds very little for anyone with any experience in these fields. The articles, with a couple of exceptions, are all of the "beginner's introduction" type.

The magazine is filled with beautiful color and black and white photographs, some wargay captioned. The articles are either too general (the whole spectrum of wargames) or too specific (a particular set of "measures" path). When discussing miniatures the magazine seems pre-occupied with the 24mm-32mm and over 32mm ranges, with only a few examples in the 15mm scale.

The first issue of **FANTASY MODELING** seems to be a first-rate job, with typeset throughout and even whole columns interspersed. At a cover price of \$2.50, the first issue is worth buying only for the pictures, or as an introduction to the hobby. Hopefully, later issues of this magazine will show improvement, otherwise this magazine will be one to be avoided.

—Ain Delany

**GAMESMASTER CATALOG** (Oregon & Assoc., Clifton House, Clifton, VA 22034); \$9.95, 8 1/2" x 11" 202-page book, many color photos. Published 1980.

This is the first comprehensive guide to games in print. It lists a good proportion of the games presently available, across twelve FRP Games and Adventures, Fantasy & Mythology, Science Fiction and Science Fantasy, Historical and Contemporary, Miniatures & Miniatures Rules, Accessories, Computer & Video, FRP Games, and several others. There are also indexes of publishers and games.

The CATALOG is a great deal of fun to browse through . . . every bit as good as being tested loose in a well-stocked game store. In particular, it's a great opportunity to find out what some of the newer companies are offering. Most of the ads are illustrated, many of the illustrations are color photos.

Caveat: All these beautiful photos and product descriptions are actually sold, written and paid for by the manufacturers . . . and, like any other ads, they must be taken with a grain of salt. The CATALOG doesn't review games, it advertises them. Expect its listings to play up games' strong points and ignore the weak ones. Also, publishers who don't buy advertising will not be found in the illustrated section (though many are in the indexes).

On the whole, though, the GAMESMASTER CATALOG is a good buy for the serious game collector — and a treat for a game club or store. I'm looking forward to next year's addition.

—Steve Jackson

**RICHARD BERG'S REVIEW OF GAMES** (SPE), edited by Richard Berg, \$1 per issue (over \$PI, or \$25 for one year (25 issues). Four 8 1/2" x 11" pages per issue. First published 1980.

**BERG'S REVIEW**, or **RRRGG**, is a new kind of hobby publication: a short, frequent, professionally produced feature dedicated

(almost) solely to reviews. Its editor is an SPE old-timer, and certainly qualified to take on the project. A typical issue contains three game reviews (shorter than feature length, but longer than capsule), an editorial, and Gergen, a "soup column."

Predictably, the reviews are the best part of the issue. Most of them have seemed clear and fairly objective (though some needed editing for length and style). The cross-section of companies and subjects is as good as could be expected at a rate of six games per month, and no SPI-biasism is evident. Most reviews so far have been of fairly recent games — another plus. There is no advertising, which may be a plus or a minus, depending on your taste.

But, on the whole, I'm not sure **RRRGG** is

worth the money. No matter how you slice it, it ends up costing about as much per year, and three or four times as much per page, as an ordinary magazine. The hard-to-read computer type doesn't really seem to save much space. And a good chunk of each issue is taken up by the "soup" columns, which tend greatly to live down to the "standard" utility (**AD&C**'s "Woody" "Letter from Gaps." Is there a place for this kind of stuff in wargaming? Maybe, but not at these prices.

This is a good effort; I just can't pick it up without thinking "Whee!" the rest of the magazine! Recommendation: Subscribe to **SGT**, **F&M**, **Dragon**, and **T&G** first. If you still have time and money, by all means get this

—Steve Jackson

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## Letters

Ordinarily, I accept the advice Oscar Wilde gave Lily Langtry when she sat out upon the stage: "In your career, you will receive many reviews. Reply to none of them."

Since I'm writing this response to Mr. Kazan's review of *81 Dasher*, which is not my game, I might not be violating this principle — but then again I might, since the comment which offends my sensibilities could easily apply to my own Spandex *Leader* computer games. One game, like those from Avalon Hill, will hold interchangeably on TRS-80, Apple, and PET computers. We consider this to be a significant accomplishment — but Mr. Kazan's remarks are totally negative: "Two thirds of what you bought is wasted," he writes, implying that the games cost three times what they should. That is a pretty stark charge — and I wish to plead "not guilty."

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The only thing that would be different on the single machine version would be the tape cassette with the program on it. This now costs ten minutes of magnetic tape. With a cassette version for the Apple we could use only four minutes — and the cost would be about double what it is now.

Why? Well, when was the last time you bought a four-minute tape? That's right, they don't make four-minute tapes! Of course, they can make four-minute tapes if you want them — but you have to pay extra. As long as you see less than the trouble, off-the-shelf, ready-to-use medium size, you don't pay more for better tapes. The people who mass-produce our tapes charge us a fixed set-up cost for each game plus so much per cassette recorded thereafter. At present, plus that we don't have enough money for huge production runs, the set-up cost for a 1000 game run is 40% of the total. Obviously, if we could make bigger runs, the unit cost would come down — by 20% on a 2000 game run, 30% on a 4000 game run, and so on. This is why Avalon Hill costs you \$15.95 and ours cost \$20.00. The more mathematics would take effect if we made separate versions for each system: given a fixed amount of money to spend, we would have to pay those set-up costs when we now pay one. This would increase our production costs by 80%!

Thus, for those "two thirds of what you pay for" being "wasted" it would seem that up to half of what you get is lost!

David A. Wesley  
Discovery Games

*Players will miss! But note Bruce Weber's column in issue 26.*

-S/

The *Travels* thoughts have just been fired as I write, and now I can say that I did have no doubts about the good term of your game *Real* or *Real*. Certainly I could still not see its high quality as a game design, but I was afraid that an unfavorable reaction to this article would reflect badly on you and on our games in general (as well as spoiling the game permanently for me).

But now *Real*'s live and apparently unharmed, and such questions of taste are moot. Now we can examine the game and see it for what it is: a clean, playable, playable simulation of which any designer could be proud.

Alvin Vazny  
Reno, NV

I am happy to report that I have just completed a new sourcebook for EPT. This came to over 500 pages, double spaced, and it contains not a single rule or game device! It is just an exposition of the world of Tolkien, its people, cultures, etc. I did not describe the whole planet — this would have taken many volumes — but I did give details in all of the corners of the great northern continent on which the old EPT centered. Today's is still the hub of affairs, but I have now added materials for the other four great kingdoms (Tan Kiri, Salravos, Mu'aglayevs, and Lyravos), plus considerable information on some of the smaller nations, the tribes, etc. I have compiled an additional two big terrain maps, which lead off outward through Salravos and Korrelia past the Plains of Glass to the far western coast. All of these items have been sent off to Lee Sando, who seems willing to consider publishing it. There is no dud here as yet. Lee apparently wishes to consolidate his business with his new partners and get his cash flow straightened out before rushing into an expensive publication.

I'm hard at work on the actual review of the rules. I have a draft all done, but I scribbled in favor of writing a separate sourcebook (which can be used for the old EPT as well as for the review), then the actual rules themselves can be devoted to the matters of game mechanics — precisely as though someone wrote a book on the warfare and countries of the Napoleonic period in order to get all of the background out of the way before writing a set of Napoleonic miniature rules. I expect to have the rules compiled by spring. I do not know what Lee will have the sourcebook ready — or the rules — but I hope it will be the summer sometime.

Prof M.A.R. Barker  
Manchester, Mass.

I write this letter as an error to my "More Fantasy for Trainers" article that appeared in issue 35 of *The Space Gamer*. To preserve the maximum ability of Full Body Fantasy Central requires an experience level of thirteen and the expenditure of fourteen points strength points, the ability of Full Inner Strength Potential is an ability requiring an experience level of fourteen and the expenditure of fourteen points strength points. Also, the article may be considered an extension of that which appeared in TSG 33. The separate article which may be added or discarded at will.

Kenneth Wallace Beder  
Hartford, CT

After the article on campaign *Mythica* appeared, I organized a game at the place where I work (a chemical plant) with six players and a neutral ship commander. About a month later one of the players expressed another game due to the interest generated. Another game has been organized recently. There are about 20 people at the plant involved in playing the game once some are playing in teams. All but 4 of these people had never played a simulation game before. This new interest has greatly increased the number of people I have to "battle" with. I intend to have a similar game every *Mythica* Campaign rules after this game is completed. Keep up the good work.

Tom Kenyon  
Bay City, TX

My "thing" in getting in Napoleonic, as my approach to painting miniatures may be considerably different from Mr. Bokkirk's. I agree with most of what he says, except I have experience in painting in three areas, but I've found that a spray stain, normally used in one-pass painting, works better and faster than painting on a glass, flat, or scrim-paint finish. The stuff comes in aerosol cans for about \$2.00, in glass and clear plastic, which just about covers (no pun) the range I need for 15mm armies. Also, the spray does away with caulkstone/commosn problems both in the paint and metal. I have now 15mm Mini-Figs I painted 5 years ago that haven't lost any of the color scheme or gathered "rust" on the metallic paint/exposed metal areas, and I suspect that it's the spray make that did it. My old 25mm Napoleonic have suffered from capstone, and were not protected with the spray. The article that I read in TSG 34 was well written and informative, but I have had long eyes on 15mm's and it's a total waste of time, at least for army formations.

Lloyd W. Wells  
Manchester, TX



I enjoyed the private happenings of the rules style for *Dungeons*, especially so because it appeared in a highly favorable review. Patrick Johnson captured the strengths and weaknesses of the game with admirable brevity, balancing the kudos of the cooperative approach with the many (ahhh!) innovative ideas. I must dispute his conclusion that DQ can give TSR a run for the money. *Dungeons & Dragons* is too firmly entrenched to just from any challenge like that a heavy media blitz. What with increasing coverage of the D&D "phenomenon," the game has become synonymous with fantasy role-playing the way *Kluge* is with social issue.

Mr. Johnson seems confused as to who was involved in the design of DQ. While Myers, Skocron, Rytz, and Bessel did contribute to the final product, their efforts were not in game design or development. Initially, I designed the full prototype, and then Dave Ritchie and Ted Woods each took large chunks of the game and worked them over to their satisfaction (and not necessarily mine). When I ceased to work for SPI, I turned over further design in the system to Dave Ritchie.

I pointed an abrupt end to The Space Gamer's re-affiliation with any game company. The credibility of the magazine, which was respect when reviewing a Steve Jackson game, is now also in doubt when reviewing a Steve Jackson game in all this clamor. It is unlikely that articles on itself will be taken seriously until the first "yes" of a Jackson effort is printed. Even then, those are some murky waters which will prove to be critical positions whenever the faintest hint of praise is found about one of his games. And there should be more, given Steve's track record.

The concept of reviewing any and all publications in the adventure game field (plus computer programs) is a good one, but it needs balancing. I have no sense of whether a "good" game in the eyes of Elbert's distribution is the same as a Tony Watson's good game. As *The Space Gamer* advances towards dealing with the new editorial format, the reviewer identity issue will prove whom you expect a certain standard from Watson or G.D. However, the does not solve the comparison problem. Perhaps each reviewer should rate their subjects from 1 to 9, or from 1 to 5 stars, or any other similar method, at the conclusion of their comments.

Eric Goldberg  
New York, NY

Now here a star-sprinkled Space Gamer would be any worse system than the present model! (But maybe I should assign 1 to 5 stars to each reviewer. Would you think?)

-FF

## TSG BACK ISSUES

*Did you miss an article you wanted to read? Some back issues of TSG are still available:*

- No. 15. World and Olympics designer intro, Robotics in Traveller, Floating Halls; Open Update, Ono and their Weapons; computer gaming.
- No. 16. WarpWar article. Classes translated in Make, Alpha Omega, Demons! (Notes in Make), 1977 game survey results — and a LOT of reviews.
- No. 17. GEV designer's intro, strategy for Chari: 2 variants for Impalers, Mele, and a combatsan Dem/Rovers variant; WarpWar Update.
- No. 18. JetWar designer's intro, variant scenarios for Invasion: Anarchy and War of the Ring, additional equipment for Traveller, mounted Mele; "Reflex, Deduce, Thrust!" (role-playing GM technique).
- No. 19. POND WAR, variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Impaler and WarpWar; Illustrated Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Kamenick, MicroGame design article.
- No. 20. Olympics tactics, Frontier in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS, Reality in Mele, designer's optional rules for Ice War, designer's article on Starbuck & Spacesun, "Run-Off Run!" (wargaming hints).
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- No. 22. Joe War tactics, Black Hole physics, PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/Vantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.
- No. 23. Invasion of the Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones compares; Vikings and Valks in The Fantasy Trip.
- No. 24. Black Hole designer's letter; "The Psychology of Wargaming", Neal Make, "The Four-Howler Defense in Ogre", variants for Childe 1, The Creature that Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.
- No. 25. Sorler Comment issue — designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios. Also — strategy in Revita, benefit-cost analysis for Ice War, "Everyday Life in The Fantasy Trip."
- No. 26. Oswald Designer's intro, tactics in GEV; variations on Wizard; computers in wargaming; Life-sized Mele; and a variant that puts hammers forward into Rovers.
- No. 27. Hot Spot's designer's letter; Traveller, Make the Air Eaters (gaming stone war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT, Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 1; 5 pages of game reviews.
- No. 28. 1979 Game Survey results, Overview in TFT, A Guide to SF/Vantasy Game Publishers, Tank Force Game report, Writers' and Artists' guides, 7 pages of reviews, Game Design Part 2, Deat Ex Machina.
- No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro, Fantasy Fantasy Miniatures, Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed, Game Design Part 3, meet Deat Ex Machina, 7 pages of reviews.
- No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Fantasy Fantasy Miniatures Part II; Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators, 10 pages of reviews.
- No. 31. "Sam Beowulf", 1980 Game Software survey, Game Design Part 5; Random Mass Generation; 9 pages of reviews.
- No. 32. Traveller issue — Alternate Character Types, reviews of play with scenarios, and variants, also Game Design Part 6; Deat Ex Machina, "Missus Two Reasons," software survey update, Yaguri to Game report, 8 pages of reviews.
- No. 33. Play-by-mail issue — Feature reviews of four PBM games, a Warp War Campaign, Survey of PBM companies, also, Control Report, Company Report from Schabel and Joe; "End Game," GEV scenario, Game Design Part 7, Deat Ex Machina, The Good Guys, Part I, and 10 pages of reviews.
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INTERPLANETARY EMPRESSES PBM game starting soon. For information, send SASE to Robert Kaufman c/o University School, 3765 SOM, Cleveland, OH 44103.

# News & Plugs

Strategic Simulations has released its first space game, *The Warp Factor*. Price: \$39.95.

Contrary to what we printed in our last issue, the final balloting for *Cosmos* awards will be by members of the new Academy of Advanced Gaming Arts and Sciences, composed of "individuals who have made a contribution to the product and/or general advancement of the hobby." For further details, send an SASE to Awards Academy, P.O. Box 787, Troy, MI 48069.

News from FBI: To attend our somewhat notorious report in TSG 36, Michael Stockpole has not left FBI, but has taken a leave of absence. Also, *Stormer's* Appendix 9 and 10 will be combined into a double issue.

S.R. Jones & Co. offers a 5-puck high, 8-track long bronze dragon game. Price: \$750.00. The edition is limited to 1,000 numbered copies.

Synthetic Solar has announced the release of *Space Ace 2*, a 16K cassette for the TRS-80 Model I or III. Players design their own fighters and maneuver in combat. Price: \$39.95.

R.A. Franz (1010 Woodstock No. 34, Winchester, VA 22601) offers *Wargame Computerize*. Price: \$11/year (7 issues), single copy \$1.75.

Rocky Associates has produced a "Fleetside Goodies Starry Map" for *Traveler*. Price: \$1.75 for a pad of 50. Also available: dragon traps, laser plans, and more *Traveler* records. Contact them at P.O. Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14618.

Alan L. Abramson is compiling *The Campaign Guide to Fantasy Military Miniatures*. Miniatures enthusiasts should write him for a questionnaire at No. 5 Bluefield Court, Round-oke, TX 78262.

For those who like Lawrence Sanders' work — another novel, *The Seven Affairs of Osyrene* will be published by Del Rey this summer.

SPI has released a science fiction game, *The Sword and the Stars*, based on *Empire of the Middle Ages*. Price: \$9.95.

The remarkable artist Fred Jaegers is now working at a game design consultant for COLLECO, the electronic game computer.

GDW has released a revised edition of *Zi-Alentary*. Price: \$11.95.

## Calendar

March 13-15: **COASTCON** Royal D'Berardin. Contact: ConCon 81, P.O. Box 8625, Elton, MS 39321.

March 20-21: **SIMCON III**. Con for fantasy role-playing games. University of Rochester as Rochester, NY. Contact: SimCon III, Box 5142, Rochester, NY 14627.

March 20-22: **LINACON '81**. Films, art show, wargaming. Contact: LenCon '81, P.O. Box 304, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

March 27-29: **NORWESCON 4**, SF con. Contact: NORWESCON 4, P.O. Box 24267, Seattle, WA 98124.

April 4-6: **UNHSGC Spring Gaming Festival**. Con featuring miniature, board games, and RPG. Contact: R. Bradford Chese, UNHSGC, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824.

April 9-12: **COLLEGCAN 3**, F&SF con. Contact: CollegeCon 3, c/o Larry Taylor, University of Houston, N-23 UC, Program Center, 4899 Calhoun, Houston, TX 77064.

April 25-26: **MADCON III**. Con for all kinds of games. University of Wisconsin-Bron. South Contact: Pegasus Games, 322 W. Graham, Madison, WI 53703.

May 1-3 (note date change): **USACON 3**. Gaming con for SF&F, RP, and boardgames at University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL. Contact: Leo Vasilis, 3856 Lasky Dr., Mobile, AL 36688.

May 20-25: **GRIMCON III**. F&SF gaming con, Oakland. Bryant Hoast, 455 Hazenburger Road, Oakland, CA 94612. Contact: P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley, CA 94704.

June 5-7: **SPRINGCON 2**, SF fan con, including T&T tournament. Contact: PinnacCon, Inc., P.O. Box 128, Tempe, AZ 85281.

July 3-5: **ORIGINS '81**. To be held at Dunbar Motel, San Mateo, CA. Contact: Origins '81, P.O. Box 5833, San Jose, CA 95150.

July 17-19: **ODYSSEY '81**. Con featuring all kinds of games. Sponsored by the UNHSGC. Seabrook Gaming Club. For information contact: R. Bradford Chese, UNHSGC, Memorial Union Building, Durham, NH 03824.

July 24-26: **ATLANTICON**. New wargaming convention. Contact: AtlanticCon, Inc., P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220.

August 13-16: **GENCON XIV**. TRPG and new gaming releases. Contact: GenCon XIV, Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53143, 416-248-8056.

September 3-7: **DINNVENTION TWO**. SF con. Contact: Dinnvention Two, P.O. Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211 or (303) 433-8774.

September 4-7: **GLASC VI**, simulation gaming con, including master games. Contact: GLASC Secretary, c/o L. Duxall, 30550 Wyandotte St., Canoga Park, CA 91306.

September 11-15: **DRAGON FLIGHT**, a F&SF con, to be held in Seattle. Contact: The Dragon Owners Society, P.O. Box 73872, Seattle, WA 98133.

**CONVENTION ORGANIZERS** — let us know about your con! Free publicity news here.

## The Good Guys by JD



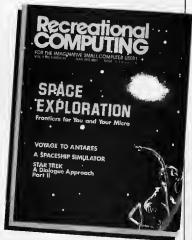
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# MANEUVERS

Fig. 1: BEND (D3)

Fig. 2: TIGHT BEND (D6)



Fig. 3: DRIFT (D1)



Fig. 4: STEEP DRIFT (D3)



Fig. 5: SWERVE (D1)



Fig. 6: HARD SWERVE (D3)



Fig. 7: BOOTLEGGER (D7)



Fig. 8: SKIDDING IT\* (crash stop)



Fig. 9: BEGINNING A ROLL (crash stop)



Fig. 10: EVENING-OUT (D0)



All maneuvers are described in Sec. 7 (pp. 7 & 8). Squares count as "squares" if taken three sides or three corners each. If the corner of a corner is exactly on the line between two squares, the vehicle's corner may either which square it occupies. Dashed lines show the vehicle's path. Note: When no picture is shown for a crash, the cycle's measurement is the same as for the front half of a car performing that maneuver.

## RAMP DECELERATION - DIFFICULTY FACTORS:

- 15 mph or less in one turn: no difficulty.
- 20 mph in one turn: D3.
- 25 mph in one turn: D5.
- 30 mph in one turn: D7, and each ten miles 1 die of damage.
- More than 30 mph in one turn: Go directly to Crash Table I, and take 2 dice of damage to each turn.

## HAZARDS

Road hazards such as oil and ice take effect only if a vehicle tries a maneuver while part of the vehicle corner is in the area affected by the hazard. In that case, the hazard ADDS the indicated number to the difficulty of that maneuver. Example: A drift, normally D1, counts as D2 if attempted in gravel, and D3 if attempted in oil.

- LIGHT RAIN or GRAVEL ON ROAD: add D1.
- HEAVY RAIN or OIL ON ROAD: add D2.
- ICE ON ROAD: add D4.

Collisions with small objects are also hazards. When a vehicle strikes any object, advance the handling marker and roll on the Control Table:

- COLLIDING WITH (OR SIDESWIPING) ANY VEHICLE: D4.
- HITTING CURB, OBSTACLE, OR PEDESTRIAN: D3.
- HITTING LOOSE DEBRIS: D2.

Enemy actions may also create a hazard:

- ENEMY FIRE DOES 1-5 HITS DAMAGE: D1.
- ENEMY FIRE DOES 6-9 HITS DAMAGE: D2.
- ENEMY FIRE DOES 10 OR MORE HITS DAMAGE: D3.
- DRIVER INJURED OR KILLED: an error D2 hazard.

Note that each enemy attack produces a separate hazard. If a vehicle is struck by three weapons in one turn, each attack would pose the handling-table marker. Also and from a separate die roll on the Control Table: Mines are "enemy fire." Spikes, debris, obstacles, etc., are not.

**TIFF BLOWOUT** D2 if the tire was lost or spiked, deflated, or did damage D3 if it was lost to enemy fire. In addition, a vehicle's handling dice drops by 1 next turn if a tire blows out. Due to a spike, etc. If the last bit of damage is done by enemy fire, the entire wheel is considered lost, and handling drops by 1 next turn. See Sec. 12. In other case, the vehicle's handling marker goes to -6 immediately.

Exceptions: If a cycle loses a wheel or tire, it goes directly to Crash Table I. If a 6-wheeler loses only one rear tire or wheel as a side, the hazard is only D1, and handling drops by only 1. Normal penalties apply if the other rear wheel or tire on that side is lost. See Sec. 12.

# VEHICLE RECORD SHEET

Vehicle: ..... Driver: .....

Left armor .....	
Back armor .....	Top armor .....
Underbody armor .....	Front armor .....
Right armor .....	

Size: ..... Weight: ..... Chassis: ..... Suspension: .....  
 Acceleration: ..... Handling Class: ..... Cost: .....  
 Extras: .....  
 Notes: .....

## SPEED TRACK

-20	-15	-10	-5	0
5	10	15	20	25
30	35	40	45	50
55	60	65	70	75
80	85	90	95	100

## HANDLING TRACK

5	4	3	2	1	0
-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6

## CONTROL TABLE

Speed	0 or better	Handling Track Status						modifier
		-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	
5-10	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	-
15-20	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	safe	-2
25-30	safe	safe	safe	2	3	4	4	0
35-40	safe	safe	1	2	3	4	5	0
45-50	safe	safe	1	2	3	4	6	1
55-60	safe	safe	2	3	4	5	6	1
65-70	safe	2	2	3	4	5	XX	2
75-80	safe	2	3	4	5	6	XX	2
85-90	safe	2	3	4	5	XX	XX	3
95-100	safe	3	4	5	6	XX	XX	3

Cross-index the handling status of your vehicle (from the Handling Track) with an speed, and roll one die. If you roll the number shown or higher, you keep control of the car. If you roll lower, you lose control.

If you lose control, go to the appropriate Crash Table (No. 1 for maneuvers, No. 2 for hazards). "Safe" means you cannot crash. "XX" means you lose control automatically - go to the Crash Table. When you go to the Crash Table for any reason, add or subtract the number in the "modifier" column for your speed - i.e., at 20 mph, you would subtract 2 from your roll on either Crash Table.

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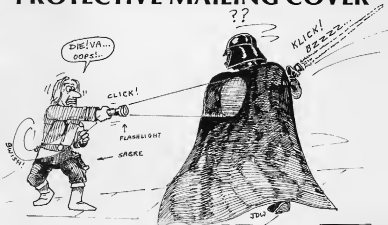
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